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AGRI-NEWS

January 5, 1987

For immediate release

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January 5, 1987
For immediate releae

Rangeland on the endangered species list

Western Canada ranchers run the risk of losing much of their native rangeland unless a greater effort is made to improve the management of this natural resource which supports nearly seven million head of cattle.

It's not that anyone is going to physically take it away from them. It's simply that the natural production value will be lost unless there is a dramatic turnaround in the way the 45 million acres of native grass is used.

Barry Adams, regional range manager with Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife in Lethbridge, says at least 50 per cent of native range on the prairies is rated in fair to poor condition and is in a declining trend.

He says for the most part the value of rangeland is underrated and its production ability is often overused. Adams says range users need to recognize that good management is essential. He also says the government needs to make a greater comittment to research and development of range management technology and improve the cattleman's skill in looking after this renewable resource. He made his comments at the recent Western Provincial Conference.

The regional range manager says native grasses are built to provide maximum production within the weather variables that exist in Alberta and across the prairies. In a good growing year native plants can have tremendous production ability and even under drought conditions their ability to produce forage far surpasses many tame forage species.

The key however is that the range must be kept in good condition to achieve its maximum production under all weather variables.

"Rangeland is often considered wasteland, whose only productive use is livestock grazing," says Adams. "But I would like people to consider rangeland as a special drought adapted cropping system. Well managed rangeland is an asset in drought years as healthy, deep-rooted native grasses produce most of their yield in spring prior to peak summer temperatures and periods of greatest leaf moisture loss."

(Cont'd)

Rangeland on the endangered species list (cont'd)

Persistent heavy grazing of native range results in a form of man-induced drought, says the specialist. Livestock remove too much plant material and not enough is left to produce ground litter cover which serves to hold in moisture. Without this litter cover, when it does rain or snow melts, much of the moisture runs away or evaporates. Lack of cover also allows the ground to bake in the sun and dry out faster.

Overgrazing also puts stress on the plant itself and reduces its ability to complete the growth cycle and store adequate food reserves. Consistent over-grazing will kill out desirable native grasses and allow less desirable species, including weeds, to establish.

Adams says there are a few key elements to good range management. The livestock should be distributed evenly over the range. Don't put out more cattle than the grass can support. Graze the pasture at the right time of year considering that the plant needs a chance to complete its growth cycle. Provide alternative spring pasture within a grazing system to delay grazing of native grassland until later in the season.

There are several grazing systems that a rancher can use which consider both the needs of rangeland and livestock production. If range is in bad shape, management programs can be developed to help it recover. There are also range improvements techniques to be applied, such as prescribed burning which helps to open up rangeland and improve forage production.

"The consequences of ignoring the problems of our western rangelands will have immense ecological, economic and social ramifications," says Adams.

He says although more research can be done, there is a good body of information available now that, if applied, could greatly improve range condition. It is important for government researchers and managers, educators and producers to begin working together to change the rather bleak future which faces Canada's rangeland.

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Contact: David Neilson
422-4385

January 5, 1987
For immediate release

There is room for farming and wildlife

As Alberta's agriculture giant rolls over, wildlife is getting squeezed out of bed, says the director of wildlife for the province.

But Robert Andrews says agriculture must wake up to the fact that wildlife has a right to the land base too, not only from a moral and environmental point of view, but in economic terms as well.

Andrews says in the first half of the century there were minor conflicts between agriculture and wildlife but there seemed to be enough space for the deer and antelope to play. But in recent years as agricultural practices have intensified, the province's wildlife, from deer to ducks, have taken it on the beak.

"The end result of this accelerated modification of the natural environment is that the coexistance of agriculture and wildlife is seriously threatened," he says. "Wildlife habitat within agricultural areas has been degraded to the point that in many areas of the province wildlife deserts exist. Many wildlife populations are severely depressed and where viable populations do exist we are in an era of substantial competition between wildlife and agricultural interests."

Andrews, director with the Alberta fish and wildlife division says the demands placed on the limited land and water resources over much of the province exceeds the capacity to produce both wildlife and agriculture without conflict. The comments were made at the recent Western Provincial Conference.

"Sometimes practices which are detrimental to the long-term welfare of the resource base are done, not out of ignorance, or unknowingly, but for short-term economic gain. Too often in the past, 'develop' or 'improve' has meant 'new use' and conversion has been to 'single use' to the detriment of all other or former uses."

The director says it is time to reassess agricultural objectives. He says all sides of the issue should work toward using the land for what it is best suited, rather than trying to change the land to suit agriculture.

(Cont'd)

Andrews supports the theory of integrated agriculture and wildlife management. It's an approach that says there may need to be some compromises but there is room for both in Alberta.

Because of the nature of the two beasts there has been and will continue to be conflicts between agriculture and wildlife. Deer and elk grazing cattle pastures and getting into haystacks, and farmers draining wetlands to make grain fields and wiping out habitat for ducks are a couple common examples on both sides of the issue.

The wildlife director says there a number of federal and provincial programs available that are geared to reduce the conflicts or provide compensation to farmers for damage done.

The Fish and Wildlife Division has also presented a formal brief to the Alberta Crop Insurance Review Committee recommending a compensation program which provides farmers with full reimbursement for all losses caused by wildlife.

But on the other side of the issue, he suggests wildlife and wildlife enhancement programs may offer some real benefits to farmers.

He says the government is examining the feasibility of legalizing game ranching of ungulates for meat production, which if adopted, could provide economic benefits to some producers.

Adams says the North Amercian Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP), geared toward the preservation of wetlands, could also provide direct and indirect benefits to farmers. This program proposes to invest up to $1 billion in Canada and as much as $460 million in Alberta over 15 years in protecting waterfowl habitat.

"The bulk of the dollars to be spent intensively managing a million acres of breeding habitat in Alberta will be channeled directly into the farming economy," he says. "The majority of the habitat gains will be in the form of land use contracts, a method of paying landowners to provide set-aside areas and to manage less productive agricultural lands for wildlife."

(Cont'd)

There is room for farming and wildlife (cont'd)

The overall Alberta economy would gain from the infusion of this largely U.S. funded program, along with the annual recreational value of waterfowl hunting to Albertans which is worth about $40 million this year.

Andrews says it time for all resource users and resource managers to come together in the management of the resource base for the long term benefit of everyone.

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Contact: David Neilson
422-4385

January 5, 1987
For immediate release

Canadian farmers 'watching' new cereal crop

There hasn't exactly been a stampede of Canadian farmers demanding seed for a relatively new man-made cereal crop, but they are interested in it, says a plant breeder with Alberta Agriculture.

"Producers are watching and asking about it but are reluctant to take off with it," says Dr. Don Salmon, with the department's field crops branch in Lacombe. He was speaking about triticale, a wheat/rye cross which has been under research and development around the world since the early 1930s.

"And I think watching is being smart," he says. "They want to see what it can do or where it will fit in before they make a commitment."

The Alberta plant breeder specializes in research work with spring and winter triticale and winter wheat. He has just sent a new spring triticale variety for registration which should be available for crop production in Canada in 1988.

There are about 6,000 hectares (ha) of triticale grown in Canada which is less than 10 per cent of the area planted to the crop in the world.

"It is not intended that triticale will someday replace one of the traditional crops that we now grow in Canada," he says. "I think it is best suited as another option that a producer has. Depending on needs or growing conditions it can be used to produce specialty milling flour, it can be used as a high protein grain in cattle feed, or it can be used as a forage crop.

"Triticales are very late maturing in comparison to barley," says Salmon. "And they are similar to white wheat in sprouting susceptability. They should only be grown for seed production in the brown soil zones of the prairies. In areas where higher rainfall occurs, spring triticale probably has its greatest potential as a silage crop comparable to oats and barley. Fall seeded winter triticale may provide an early but short term grazing crop in spring."

(Cont'd)

Canadian farmers 'watching' new cereal crop (cont'd)

Salmon says because harvesting times for triticale silage differ from other cereals, farmers can use it to provide better scheduling. With spring triticale ready for silage harvest a week to 10 days later than other crops, a farmer that has part of his land in triticale wouldn't be under the same pressure to have all the silage harvest done at once.

"Triticale is a valuable crop and can play an important role in Canadian agriculture," says Salmon. "We've only been involved in breeding work in this country since 1954, when the University of Manitoba launched its research work. As the new improved varieties are developed more and more farmers will be interested in incorporating it as part of their operation."

With 650,000 ha of triticale planted worldwide, it plays a major role in the cereal crop production in several countries.

In Australia, for example, which has a similar wheatboard marketing system to Canada, farmers there have dramatically increased production, says Salmon. Faced with the drop in the price of wheat Australian producers went from 10,000 ha of triticale to 137,000 ha, selling most of the production for cattle feed.

Looking at world figures Canada plants about 6,000 ha to triticale, including about 1,000 ha of winter triticale (mostly in eastern Canada) and 5,000 ha in spring triticale. About 25 per cent of the spring triticale is grown in Alberta with the balance in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

The U.S.S.R. is the largest producer of triticale with 250,000 ha seeded, followed by New South Wales in Australia with 125,000 ha, France with 100,000 ha, the United States with 60,000 ha and Brazil with 4,500 ha. Poland which has about 25,000 ha seeded to triticale expects to increase that production to one million hectares by 1990 as it reduces its production of rye.

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Contact: Dr. Don Salmon
782-4641

January 5, 1987
For immediate release

Farmers should plan for retirement

Just because you're a farmer doesn't mean you shouldn't think about retirement like nearly everyone else in the world.

Retirement planning should be as much a part of the farm business as any other decision made by the farm couple, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

"A lot of times I guess people don't want to think about it, or don't want to think about getting old," says Jean Wilson, a family resource management specialist with the department in Edmonton.

"Maybe they feel as long as their health is good they will stay farming. Maybe they feel they can't afford it. Regardless of the reason it is important to plan for retirement and make some decisions that not only benefit the farmer, but his family as well," she says.

Dealing with the retirement issue, as part of overall farm estate planning, should help to resolve three main questions about retirement. It should let the farmer and his wife decide where they will live after retirement. They will know where the money is coming from to support them during retirement years and it will help them decide what to do with the farm once they do retire.

Wilson says by planning ahead, retirement can be something that is looked forward to, rather than being something a farmer is forced to accept.

The specialist says it is important for the farm couple to make some decisions about retirement as early as they can in their farming careers and then set a course toward those goals.

As the years pass the couple can review and update the plans and make changes as the situation dictates.

"It is important to set aside a retirement savings fund of some kind," says Wilson. "Many people say they can't afford it, but in most cases they can't afford not to.

(Cont'd)

Farmers should plan for retirement (cont'd)

Wilson says when people think about where they will live they should be realistic. Do they really want to move to a warm climate, a thousand miles away, leaving behind family and friends and everything that has been familiar to them for 30 or 40 years?

"There's nothing wrong with this plan if that is what a person wants, but often they will do something along those lines and then realize four months down the road it isn't what they want," she says.

Another point is to plan activities for leisure time. The farm couple should develop hobbies or other projects they can pursue once they retire from farm work.

A major concern is often the disposal of the farm.

"If there are children interested in farming, the farm couple should decide when they want to phase out of the operation, or when they will turn the whole farm over to a son or a daughter. If possible, they should pick a date, which not only sets a goal for the farm couple but also lets the son or daughter know the timetable."

The specialist says decisions need to be made on how the farm will be turned over to a son or daughter, what type of business arrangement is needed and also how they will deal with those children who are not interested in farming.

"These are just some of the aspects of retirement planning that need to be dealt with," says Wilson. "It is important for the farm couple to discuss the subject and really be in control of their own future."

The retirement issue is just one of the topics covered in the recently produced Alberta Agriculture home study course, Farm Estate Planning, A Family Affair.

For more information on retirement planning, contact Jean Wilson at 427-2412. For a copy of the course contact Home Study, Extension Services Branch, Alberta Agriculture, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5T6.

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Contact: Jean Wilson
427-2412

January 5, 1987
For immediate release

Milk worth $257 million to Alberta farmers

Alberta dairy farmers earned more than $257 million dollars from milk sales in the last dairy year, while the dairy manufacturing plants that process the milk cranked out products valued at just under half a billion dollars.

According to the annual report produced by Alberta Agriculture's dairy division, the number of dairy farmers in the last dairy year was down slightly from the year before.

The report shows there were 1,567 milk producers in Alberta in the 1985/86 dairy year compared to 1,634 producers in the 1984/85 dairy year.

Total milk production was calculated at 562.2 million litres last year, down from 584.1 million litres in the previous dairy year. The estimated farm value of this milk was set a $257,215,000 for 1985/86 down from $257,491,000 in the 1984/85 year.

Although milk production was down slightly the total value of dairy products manufactured from this milk increased in 1985/86.

The total value of manufactured products including milk, cream, ice cream, butter, and cheeses was set at $495,331,000 in 1985/86 compared to $493,120,000 in 1984/85.

A further breakdown of total value shows Alberta dairy plants produced 6.37 million kilograms (kg) of butter valued at $33.89 million; 6.31 million kg of cheddar cheese valued at $41.92 million; 5.22 million kg of variety cheese valued at $28.99 million; 31.28 million litres (L) of ice cream valued at $54.12 million; 217.84 million L of milk worth $185.38 million; 9.32 (L) of cream worth $15.66 million; and 28.86 million L of skim milk, buttermilk and chocolate milk sales worth $26.64 million. Miscellaneous sales were valued at $108.69 million.

(Cont'd)

Milk worth $257 million to Alberta farmers (cont'd)

Looking at it in historical terms, the value of manufactured dairy products has increased dramatically over the last 65 years. In 1920 the total value of Alberta dairy products was calculated at $34 million. That increased gradually over the years breaking the $100 million mark in 1973. Product values passed the $400 million mark in 1982 and is now just under $500. The industry did reach a high of $509 million in 1983 but then product values dropped back to the $490 million range.

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Contact: Brian Rhiness
352-1223

Coming Agricultural Events

1987

Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association
Annual Convention
Sheraton Cavalier Hotel
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.....January 7 - 9

Canadian Alfalfa Seed School
Fantasyland Hotel
Edmonton, Alberta.....January 11 - 13
Eleanor Simpson - 377-2341

Farm and Home Week
University of Saskatchewan Campus
Saskatoon.....January 12 - 16

Alberta Alfalfa Seed Producers Annual Meeting
Fantasyland Hotel
Edmonton, Alberta.....January 14
Eleanor Simpson - 377-2341

Unifarm Annual Convention
Edmonton Inn
Edmonton, Alberta.....January 12 - 15
Willow Webb - 451-5912

Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association
15th General Meeting and Convention
Marlborough Inn
Calgary, Alberta.....January 16 - 17
Don Saynor, Calgary - 250-2509

Alberta Horse Breeders Conference
Capri Centre
Red Deer, Alberta.....January 16 - 18
Donna Cunningham - 291-4596

Market Gardeners Course
Red Deer, Alberta.....January 20 - 21
Phil Dixon - 973-3351

Association of Alberta Co-op Seed Cleaning Plants
Annual Convention
Westin Hotel
Edmonton, Alberta.....January 22 - 24
Gus Lindstrom - Bashaw - 372-3580

Alberta Pork Seminar
Banff Park Lodge
Banff, Alberta.....January 27 - 30
Val Smythe - U of A - 403-432-2406

(Cont'd)

Coming Agricultural Events (cont'd)

Alberta Canola Growers Association Annual Convention
Edmonton Inn
Edmonton, Alberta.....January 28 - 30
Marcel Maisonneuve - Edmonton - 454-0844

The Challenge of Change
Capri Centre
Red Deer, Alberta.....January 29
District agriculturist's office, Red Deer - 340-5364

Canadian Charolais Association Convention
Lethbridge Lodge
Lethbridge, Alberta.....January 29 - 31
Les Ledene - 250-9242

Alberta Dairymen's Association
79th Provincial Dairy Convention and 66th Annual Meeting
Marlborough Hotel
Calgary, Alberta.....February 2 - 4
Bette Paterson - 453-5942

Western Fertilizer and Chemical Dealers Assocation (WFCDA)
Winnipeg Convention Centre
Winnipeg, Manitoba.....February 4 - 6
Dave Wowchuk - Brandon, Manitoba - (204)725-4236

What's In Stock For You? (Beef Seminar)
Travelodge Hotel
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.....February 3 - 5
Al Hingston - 306-787-4694

Canadian Meat Council
Westin Hotel
Ottawa, Ontario.....February 5 - 6
Larry Campbell (416) 239-8411

Western Canadian Conference on the Food Industry
Sheraton Cavalier
Calgary, Alberta.....February 9 - 10
John Melicher - 403-451-5959

Provincial Agricultural Service Board Conference
Lethbridge Lodge
Lethbridge, Alberta.....February 9 - 11
Vernon Arnold - Foremost - 867-3530

Alberta Beef Symposium
Convention Inn
Edmonton, Alberta.....February 10 - 11
Don Milligan - 948-5101

(Cont'd)

Coming Agricultural Events (cont'd)

Prairie Potato Council
Landmark Inn
Regina, Saskatchewan.....February 16 - 18
Harry Meyers - (306) 867-9233

24th Annual Alberta Soil Science Workshop
Sheraton Cavalier Hotel
Calgary, Alberta.....February 17 - 18
Al Fedkinheuer - 290-7355

Western Canadian Society for Horticulture
Landmark Inn
Regina, Saskatchewan.....February 18 - 20
William Kalyn - 306-522-3661

Western Barley Growers Association
Annual meeting and convention
Capri Centre
Red Deer, Alberta.....February 25 - 26
Linda Lukenbill - 403 - 291-3630

Prairie Implement Manufacturers Annual Meeting
Convention Centre
Calgary, Alberta.....Feburary 25 - 27

Alberta Association of Improvement Districts
Annual Convention
Convention Inn
Edmonton, Alberta.....February 25 - 27

Ag-Expo International Seed Fair
Lethbridge and District Exhibition Grounds
Lethbridge, Alberta.....March 4 - 7
Linda Barvir - Lethbridge - 328-4491

Agriculture Week in Alberta
Theme "Partners in Progress"
Alberta.....March 8 - 14
Diana Barton - Okotoks - 938-2750

Accent '87
Market Outlook for Grains and Oilseeds
Convention Inn South
Edmonton, Alberta.....March 10 - 11
Sharon Abbott - 427-5393

Alberta Dairy Seminar
Banff Springs Hotel
Banff, Alberta.....March 11 - 13
Val Smythe - 432-2406 or Janette MacDonald Adam - 986-2251

(Cont'd)

Coming Agricultural Events (cont'd)

Women of Unifarm
Red Deer, Alberta.....March 17 - 18
Willow Webb - 451-5912

Managing Agricultural Technology for Profit
(MATFP) Conference
Banff Centre
Banff, Alberta.....March 29 - April 1
Gerd Andres, Olds - 556-4240

Alberta Pork Producers Marketing Board
Annual Meeting
Edmonton, Alberta.....April 14 - 15

Agriculture Workshop for Lenders
Olds College Campus
Olds, Alberta.....May 31 - June 5
Wanda Johnson - 556- 4240 or Doug Barlund - 556-4245

Livestock Marketing Congress
Livestock Industry Institute
Harbour Castle Hilton
Toronto, Ontario.....June 9 - 11
Cindy Fernald, Mike Sweet Kansas City, Missouri - (816) 531-2235

Alberta Womens' Week
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....July 20 - 23
Kathy Lowther - 485-2236

National "Outstanding Young Farmers" Program
Rotary House, Calgary exhibition grounds
Calgary, Alberta.....October 20 - 24
Michael Guertin - Calgary - 285-6898

(Cont'd)

Coming events (cont'd)

Coming Agricultural Events

1. Do you know of any provincial (Alberta), national or international agricultural meetings, conferences or conventions coming in April, May, June 1987, or any events omitted in the attached list?

2. What are the dates? Please be sure to state whether 1987 or 1988.

3. Where are they being held? Include city or town; hotel and convention centre if known.

4. Please give the name, city or town, and phone number of a contact person for each event listed.

5. This form has been completed by (organization):

Please return this form by March 23, 1987 to:

Print Media Branch
Information Services Division
J.G. O'Donoghue Building
7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T6H 5T6

(Coming Agricultural Events are published four times a year in Agri-News. The next edition will be April 6, 1987.)

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AGRI-NEWS

JAN 22

January 12, 1987

For immediate release

This Week

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January 12, 1987
For immediate release

Virus can be a threat to pregnant mares

Horse owners and breeders should be on guard for a virus which has reached Alberta which can make horses quite ill and can often cause pregnant mares to abort.

It's not considered a life threatening epidemic says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture's horse industry branch, but it is a disease horse owners should be aware of and take precautions to prevent.

Equine Viral Arteritis (E.V.A.) is a viral disease recently diagnosed in thoroughbred and standardbred horses in Alberta, says Les Burwash, a horse specialist with the department in Calgary.

The virus causes arteries to become inflamed and damaged, resulting in fluids leaking into surrounding tissue and causing swelling or edema.

Animals that contract the disease will show varying degrees of the symptoms and discomfort, but the ailment should pass within 10 days to two weeks. Once a horse has had E.V.A. it will not get it again.

The most serious impact is that the disease can cause abortion among pregnant mares.

Burwash says there is no cure for the disease and the animals will just have to weather it through. There is a preventive vaccine which is recommended for breeding stock or animals being shown or raced. However, horses that are being raised for export should not be vaccinated.

The clinical signs of the disease are extremely variable but may include:

- elevated rectal body temperature up to 105 F.
- stocking up of all four limbs - may be very slight to very severe.
- edema on the ventral body wall and sheath.
- puffy eyelids.
- inflamed and congested mucous membranes of the mouth and eyes.
- small hemorrhage patches on the gums.
- depression and loss of appetite.
- generalized stiffness and soreness.
- 70 per cent of pregnant mares will abort in four weeks from exposure to the virus.

(Cont'd)

"The clinical signs last from two to 10 days and the severity of the signs is dependent on the amount of virus the horse is exposed to," says Burwash.

The virus is primarily transmitted by aerosol or through the air...an infected horse breathing out the germs that are inhaled by a healthy horse.

"The horse is capable of shedding or transmitting the virus for 48 hours to five weeks after contact," says the specialist. "The disease is also spread via contaminated objects such as twitches, pails and water buckets.

"Venereal transmission by the stallion to susceptible mares is also significant as 40 per cent of stallions that contact the disease will continue to shed the virus in semen."

Carrier stallions, can continue to spread the virus from one year to the next, says the specialist. Although all the answers aren't known, it appears some stallions can return to normal health and performance, but harbor the virus in their reproductive systems for some time. There are reports of the virus being present in the carrier's system for more than two years.

"The disease can be controlled and prevented through a combination of management and vaccination," says Burwash. "An industry committee has prepared a number of recommendations for horse owners."

Through an approved veterinarian, owners should have their breeding stallions blood-tested and vaccinated for E.V.A.

If the test proves negative, the vaccine will protect the stallion against contracting the disease. If the stallion tests positive, it will then be tested to determine if he is shedding the virus in semen.

"All mares being bred to shedding stallions should be vaccinated first. Mares that are known to have had the disease will not require vaccination. However, laboratory services are not available to test the status of mares through blood samples.

(Cont'd)

Virus can be threat to pregnant mares (cont'd)

"Mare owners who are concerned about their mares aborting from the disease should contact their veterinarian for advice on vaccination," says Burwash. "It may be advantageous for horse owners with horses going to racetracks or shows to have them vaccinated to decrease the risk of horses being out of training for up to two months."

However, horses that test positive for E.V.A. cannot be exported to countries such as France, England or Ireland. A test will read positive in animals which have had the disease or have been vaccinated against it.

Burwash suggests pleasure horses being kept at home and not generally exposed to other horses are at low risk and do not need to be vaccinated.

The vaccine will only be available through veterinarians. Each horse that is vaccinated will have a certificate issued by the veterinarian and a copy will be kept on file with the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association. For more information contact your veterinarian.

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Contact: Les Burwash
297-6650

January 12, 1987
For immediate release

Quantity and quality may not compare

Bumper grain crops and cheap livestock feed may seem like a blessing to producers but they should realize feed quantity and nutritional quality don't necessarily go hand in hand.

A specialist with Alberta Agriculture's soils and animal nutrition lab in Edmonton says there are indications that livestock feeds such as oats and barley may be low in protein, this year.

"I wouldn't say this is a general problem across the province, but we have observed several cases where farmers have harvested high bushel weight grains, but the protein levels are low," says Abdul Suleiman, an animal nutritionist with the beef cattle and sheep branch.

"It doesn't always follow this pattern but often we see when we have bumper crops that the nutritional values are somewhat diluted."

Suleiman says producers trying to maintain livestock weights over winter will probably find adequate protein levels in the oats and barley. But anyone trying to put weight on calves and yearlings or hogs may find the feed is lacking. The problem of protein not being adequate in cattle rations would be even more acute if low quality forages or straw are being fed to calves in significant amounts.

The animal nutritionist recommends a feed analysis to determine protein levels and find out whether protein supplementation is needed. After energy, protein is the second most limiting nutrient for livestock.

In some feed analysis this year Suleiman has found the imbalance between bushel weight and protein content. As an example one test showed oats with a 44 pound bushel weight with protein at 7.8 per cent. Barley with a 56 pound bushel weight had a protein level of about 8.5 per cent.

A normal average for these two grains would be oats at a 40 pound bushel weight with 10 per cent protein and barley with a 48 pound bushel weight with 11.5 per cent protein.

(Cont'd)

Quantity and quality may not compare (cont'd)

"It is not a major problem across Alberta," he says. "But if producers see that their livestock are not producing as well as expected they should check these protein levels. With plenty of cheap feed available this year the feed analysis may be something that has been forgotten."

Suleiman says feed grains can be analyzed at any of the five privately owned testing laboratories in the province or at the soils and animal nutrition laboratory in Edmonton.

For more information producers should contact their nearest district agriculturist or regional livestock specialist.

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Contact: Abdul Suleiman
436-9150

January 12, 1987
For immediate release

Tillage rates hold steady

The cost of hiring contractors to plow and cultivate fields in 1986 was about the same as 1985 rates, according to survey results released by Alberta Agriculture.

Figures collected by the department's statistics branch in Edmonton show custom charges for tillage operations are unchanged for 1986.

While rates do vary depending on local economic and land conditions, the range quoted by 59 survey participants is similar to 1985 levels, says Garth Nickorick a farm management economist.

The rates for plowing pasture or hayland ranged from $20 to $22 per acre.

Discing cropland was commonly charged at $6 to $7.50 per acre. Working on pasture or hayland added $3 to $4 per acre to the charges.

Cultivation of cropland or summerfallow ranged from $4.50 to $6 per acre. Harrowing costs were $3 to $3.50 per acre.

Nickorick notes these rates are for a single pass over the field and do not represent the total cost of a season's work.

For further information or a copy of the survey, contact Nickorick, at the farm business management branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0.

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Contact: Garth Nickorick
556-4247

January 12, 1987
For immediate release

Tree pruning courses offered in March

Anyone interested in learning the technique of tree pruning and tree care should register soon for an annual course offered by Alberta Agriculture in Brooks and Edmonton.

The two-day tree pruning course will be offered simultaneously March 3 and 4 at the Alberta Horticultural Research Center at Brooks and the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticultural Centre just northeast of Edmonton.

Registration is limited to 30 people at each location and the deadline for registering is March 1.

Although the courses are designed for people whose jobs involve trees, the sessions are open to anyone interested in tree maintenance and beautification, says Herman Oosterhuis, a tree specialist with the department.

Each course covers specific pruning techniques recommended for shade, ornamental and fruit trees, and is arranged so participants have opportunity to practise what they learn in the classroom. The courses, which cost $10, will also cover insect and disease control as it relates to pruning; tree structural growth; tree and shrub hardiness and tree varieties that are recommended in Alberta.

Some 110 people attended the 1986 courses and several preregistrations have already been received for the 1987 courses.

Registration forms are available from the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre at R.R. 6, Edmonton, T5B 4K3 or the Alberta Horticultural Research Center, Bag Service 200, Brooks, T0J 0J0.

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Contact: Herman Oosterhuis
973-3351

January 12, 1987
For immediate release

Farmer wears more than one hat

Along with a host of other skills, a farmer must also be a good negotiator, says a management consultant from Ontario.

Negotiating skills aren't just within the domain of labor leaders and corporate managers, says Jim Murray from Guelph. The ability to resolve all kinds of disputes begins right at the farm gate.

"Whether you like it or not, you are a negotiator," he says to farmers. "Buying, selling, hiring, firing...from parent-child and spousal relationships to complex business dealings...negotiating is always going on."

Murray, will be one of the key speakers at Alberta Agriculture's Managing Agricultural Technology for Profit conference in March.

Farm couples from across Alberta are expected to sign up to hear Murray and other speakers when the conference registration forms are distributed in early January, says Anita Lunden, conference co-ordinator.

Murray was chairman of continuing education at the University of Guelph for 11 years.

In his sessions on negotiating, he emphasizes, "negotiating is a skill, an attitude and an approach to life that can determine your prosperity and the quality of your life."

His practical approach to the topic will enable conference participants to apply their skills to situations that range from deciding who will do what chores, to getting better prices for farm products.

Under the theme of People, Planning and Profit, conference speakers will also cover aspects of financial management, market expertise, production and human relations skills, says Lunden.

Conference registration forms were sent out with Alberta Agriculture market analysis publication The Weekly, January 9 and will be also be enclosed with the January issue of Compu-Farm. All department extension offices and the farm business management branch in Olds will have copies, as well.

(Cont'd)

Farmer wears more than one hat (cont'd)

Anyone who attended the conference in the last three years will receive an invitation in the mail, says Lunden.

The conference is being held March 29 to April 1, 1987 at the Banff Centre.

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Contact: Anita Lunden
556-4276

January 12, 1987
For immediate release

Home study earns good report card

Farmers taking time at home to learn more about their business are younger, better educated, have been farming for fewer years, have larger farms and higher gross sales than the average provincial farm population.

They are among the estimated 5,000 people each year who take advantage of at least one of a dozen courses offered through Alberta Agriculture's Home Study Program. This profile of course participants was one of the highlights from an evaluation of the home study program conducted in 1986.

The survey showed home study participants are more likely to be males (85 per cent), younger (79 per cent under age 45), to be better educated (85 per cent having completed high school and 59 per cent with some post secondary training), to have been farming for fewer years (44 per cent for 10 years or less), to be operating larger farmers (44 per cent with more than 760 acres), and to have higher gross sales (41 per cent with $100,000 or more and 11 per cent with more than $250,000) than the average of Alberta's farm population.

One primary conclusion from the recently released survey results is that people are basically satisfied with the home study program, says Pat Davidson, co-ordinator of the program in Edmonton.

"The survey also indicated ways in which the progam can be improved," she says. "But it is clear that home study is meeting the needs of farmers."

The program which was started in 1974 is described as a "self-directed distance education program". Comprehensive material on 12 agricultural topics is available to any interested producer. The material is mailed to the farmer who works at his own pace, in his own time to complete the course outline.

(Cont'd)

Home study earns a good report card (cont'd)

Developed under the direction of Alberta Agriculture specialists, the information is essentially the same advice the farmer would receive if he could sit down for a full week or more with a department expert and talk about nothing except one area of concern.

Since that type of exchange isn't practical, home study presents the subject material in an organized, easy to read, easy to follow, often illustrated format that the farmer and his family can study at home.

The expert advice is still available from the department to explain details and answer questions, but the core material is contained in the home study package.

Topics currently available range from animal health and cattle nutrition to computers, pork production, crop protection and farm estate planning to name a few.

"It had been some time since we had conducted an evaluation of the home study program," says Davidson. "We wanted to do a needs assessment to find out what topics people wanted covered and what methods of delivery they prefer. We also wanted to know the general characteristics of our clients."

The survey was mailed to 3,900 registrants who had taken courses in the 18 months prior to the survey. Some 1,334 replies (34 per cent)were received and tabulated.

"As far as surveys go the response was very good," says Davidson. "We received very favorable comments and we also received suggestions about how we can improve. But for the most part we seem to be on the right track."

Other highlights from the survey show that 87 per cent of respondents would recommend a home study course to a friend or neighbor.

Ninety-nine per cent said they hold on to course material for future reference. Most also said December, January and February were the best months to work on home study.

(Cont'd)

Home study earns a good report card (cont'd)

The top two suggestions for future courses were on intensive crop management (maximizing profit, not yield) and farm financial management. Most respondents also said it would be useful to have a video made to accompany each course to help illustrate or explain the material further.

For more information on the home study program or the evaluation report contact Pat Davidson at the home study office in Edmonton at 427-2404.

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Contact: Pat Davidson
427-2404

January 12, 1987
For immediate release

Farmers part of world class industry

Alberta farmers will be able to learn what happens to their products after they leave the farm gate, at a food industry conference in Calgary next month.

Experts from food processing and marketing fields will be addressing the seventh annual Western Canadian Economic Conference on the Food Industry at the Sheraton - Cavalier Hotel.

The theme of the February 9 and 10 conference is Developing A World Class Food Industry in Western Canada.

While the conference is geared for anyone involved in any aspect of the food industry, organizers say it will be of special interest to producers.

"The conference will have a valuable message for farmers," says John Melicher, executive director, Rural Education and Development Association (REDA) in Edmonton.

"We're saying to producers, you grow and raise the products and we're here to tell you what we are doing to get them sold. We're not looking at long technical presentations, just some straight forward talk from some of the leaders in the industry."

Speakers will be reviewing the current information that is and will be influencing the provincial and national markets in food retailing in western Canada. They will be discussing the short and medium term economic future of the food industry and looking at new and changing food systems.

Among those scheduled to address the conference are Ian Greenwood, marketing manager of Dairyland Foods; Pierre Lortie, president of Provigo Inc.; Walter Makowecki, president of Heritage Foods Limited; Allan Levy of Fletcher's Fine Foods Ltd. and George McClure, vice-president of McCain Foods Ltd.

(Cont'd)

Farmers part of world class food industry (cont'd)

Among the policy makers and advisors speaking at the conference are Alberta Agriculture Minister Peter Elzinga; Ken Meier, assistant director, Oregon Department of Agriculture and Dr. Fred Wolfe, chairman of the Department of Food Science at the University of Alberta.

For further information or to register contact the REDA office at 451-5959.

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Contact: John Melicher
451-5959

January 12, 1987
For immediate release

Advance payment tax explained

Alberta farmers are reminded that recent changes to the taxation of Canadian Wheat Board advances may require modification of their year end tax management strategies, say specialists with Alberta Agriculture.

"In 1985 and subsequent years, Canadian Wheat Board cash advances have been considered as loans," says economist Merle Good. "Producers report the sale of their grain when it is sold, rather than when the advance is received.

"For example, in the fall of 1986 a farmer on the cash basis received a $10,000 advance, based on his quota acres. Under the new regulations, this advance is not reported as income. When grain is actually delivered against the advance, the portion of the delivery required to pay down the advance is reported as income."

To continue the example, delivery of $1,500 worth of grain, prior to the end of 1986, where $1,000 is applied against the advance, and the balance of $500 is payable to the producer, the entire amount is reported and taxable as a grain sale for that year.

"Although this procedure is quite straightforward, a degree of confusion exists where a producer elects to use a deferred cash purchase ticket when delivering on his quota while an advance is outstanding," says farm management specialist Douglas Duff.

By electing a deferred cash purchase ticket for 1987, the repayment of the advance is still made upon delivery, but the producer does not report the ticket as income until the date of the deferral.

"In our example, the producer would receive a deferred cash purchase ticket with the appropriate deductions, including the $1,000 of the cash advance," says Duff. "The balance owing the producer is $500. The question that arises is, in which taxation year will the $1,000 withheld by the elevator company, to repay the advance, be considered income to the producer?"

(Cont'd)

Advance payment tax explained (cont'd)

The answer is that the entire gross amount of the ticket, in this case $1,500, is reported and taxable in 1987. The producer would have been able to use the deferred cash purchase ticket balance ($500) in 1986 to pay allowable expenses. The $1,000 withheld by the elevator would not be eligible for allowable expense allocation as it represents the repayment of a cash advance loan.

For more information on taxes and advance payments contact Merle Good or Douglas Duff at the farm business management branch in Olds at 556-4240.

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Contact: Merle Good/Douglas Duff
556-4240

January 12, 1986
For immediate release

Video looks at "red water" problem

It may not draw box office lineups, but for farm families coping with well water with too much iron, a new video from Alberta Agriculture could be a smash hit.

Dissolved iron in water often called "red water" is the number one water quality problem for farmers that use well water, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

"The problem is often complicated by the presence of iron bacteria and the many alternative treatment methods that can be chosen under specific task conditions," says Archie Archampong, a water engineer with the department in Edmonton.

The newly released Alberta Agriculture video documentary lists the five main methods of controlling the problem, but focuses attention on the conventional iron filter.

"Before getting into the nuts and bolts of the problem the documentary makes a distinction between dissolved iron from aquifer sources and iron problems caused by the presence of iron bacteria," says Archampong. "While iron bacteria forms a slime on the inside walls of toilet flush tanks, dissolved iron from the aquifer leaves a hard gritty deposit. The documentary recommends keeping iron bacteria in check by shock chlorination before considering the methods used in controlling mineral iron in water."

The video uses cartoons to illustrate how dissolved iron gets into well water and subsequent transformation of the iron into the common red water syndrome. It goes on to list the treatment methods:

1. Polyphosphates
2. Chlorination
3. Aeration filters
4. Water softeners
5. Greensand iron filters.

(Cont'd)

Video looks at "red water" problem (cont'd)

Polyphosphates form a skirt or shield, so to speak, around the iron mineral and prevents it from forming rust particles. Polyphosphates can control up to three milligrams per litre (mg/L) of iron in water.

The chlorination method involves the addition of chlorine with a chemical feed pump and filtration of rust particles. The method is usually used when dissolved iron content is greater than seven mg/L. The chlorination methods has the additional advantage of controlling disease-causing bacteria.

In the aeration filtration method, dissolved iron is removed by mixing the water with oxygen from the air to form rust particles. The rust particles are then filtered out.

"Ordinary water softeners can also remove up to three mg/L of iron," says Archampong. "If this level of iron removal is adequate in your situation, you have the advantage of removing both iron and water hardness in one single unit.

"The video goes on to discuss the most popular method of iron removal on the market today - greensand iron filters. The three component parts of the filter are described. The filter head functions as the brains of the unit. It consists of a timer which controls the various modes of operation."

There is also a tank, usually made of fibreglass, used in housing the filter bed. The third component is the filter bed which is composed of manganese greensand and a gravel pack.

There are five operational modes involved in the fully automatic iron filter. These are: the service mode, the backwash mode, the regeneration mode, a slow rinse and a fast rinse.

In the service mode, raw water enters the iron filter and passes down through the filter bed. The dissolved iron present in the water is exposed to oxygen stored in the filter bed. The exposed iron is then converted into rust particles which are trapped in the filter bed.

Clear water, now free of iron, is allowed to flow up the riser tube and out to service the house.

(Cont'd)

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Video looks at "red water" problem (cont'd)

As the filter is used, the oxygen content of the greensand becomes exhausted and the filter bed becomes clogged with rust particles. It therefore becomes necessary to backwash and regenerate the filter bed, says the engineer.

"The video uses a combination of schematics and footage of a prototype see-through iron filter to illustrate the direction of water movements in the various modes of operation."

The video goes on to say a few words about equipment maintenance and rehabilitation. The level of potassium permanganate in the chemical tank must be checked and topped up on an average of once every six months. Iron filters that fail to function properly can be rehabilitated by soaking the filter bed in potassium permanganate (16-24 ounces in 5-10 gallons of water) for four to eight hours.

"The video ends with a recap of the conditions under which iron filters are best suited and a summary of the five iron filter operational modes," says Archampong. "There is also a word of advice on the variety of filter head sophistication available on the market and the need to select units with respect to the amount of sophistication and technology required to get the job done."

For further information about red water problems, refer to Alberta Agriculture publications: Alternatives for Iron Removal [Agdex FS716 (D11)], Iron Removal by Chlorination and Filtration [Agdex FS716 (D34)], Exchanging Filter Media [Agdex FS716 (D40)], Iron Filters [Agdex FS 716 (D42)] and Cleaning Iron from Automatic Softeners [Agdex FS716 (D45)]. All are available from the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5T6.

For specific information on water purification, contact one of the following regional engineering staff: Orin Kenzie, Lethbridge, 781-5112; Rich Smith, Airdrie, 948-5101; Ken Williamson, Red Deer, 340-5324; Larry Wasylik, Vermilion, 853-8109; Bob Buchanan, Barrhead, 674-8253 and Bill Cornwell, Fairview, 835-2291.

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Contact: Regional engineering staff (your area)
Archie Archampong - 427-2181

January 12, 1987
For immediate release

Expert talks about pregnancy problems

An expert on conception and breeding problems in mares will be among the guest speakers in Red Deer next week at the Alberta Horse Breeders' Conference.

Dr. Gordon Woods of Washington State University at Pullman, will be among those speaking to horse breeders and trainers from across the province, January 17 and 18, at the Capri Centre.

Woods has done extensive research on conception and embryonic loss in mares. His work indicates that over 90 per cent of mares conceive each cycle they are bred, but 25 per cent of these pregnancies will be lost within six weeks.

The age of the mare and management, greatly influence this loss, says Woods. Included in his talk will be management recommendations to reduce this embryonic loss.

For more information and registration, contact the Alberta Horse Industry Branch, in Calgary at 297-6650 or in Edmonton at 427-8905.

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Contact: Les Burwash
297-6650

January 12, 1987
For immediate release

Spruce Meadows owner to address conference

A man who built a small backyard family business into one of Canada's most successful corporations will share his marketing skills with Alberta horse breeders in Red Deer next week.

Ron Southern, president of Atco Industries of Calgary will speak to the Alberta Horse Breeders' Conference, January 17 and 18, on marketing principles.

Along with Atco, Southern is also the owner of Spruce Meadows, an internationally known equestrian sport centre south of Calgary.

"Marketing agricultural products is often difficult, as producers produce a product with no consideration on how or where to sell it," says Les Burwash, a specialist with Alberta Agriculture's horse industry branch in Calgary. "Ron Southern has a wealth of marketing experience gained over the years in building the Atco corporation."

Southern and his wife Marg, have built Spruce Meadows to enhance equestrian sport in western Canada.

"They have developed the Masters into the richest show jumping competition in the world," says Burwash. "Equi-Fair, held in conjunction with the Masters is North America's largest horse trade fair where many horses and horse products change hands.

"The conference is extremely fortunate to have Ron Southern as the feature speaker to address horse breeders on marketing techniques that will enhance their business."

For more information on the conference, contact the horse industry branch in Calgary at 297-6650 or in Edmonton at 427-8905.

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Contact: Les Burwash
427-8905

January 12, 1987
For immediate release

Green potatoes can be problem for consumers

Better care at the retail level and at home could go a long way in preventing a common problem for homemakers who find potatoes turning green and bitter in the pantry.

Essentially poor handling and storage practices, after the produce leaves the farm gate, causes most of the problems, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

Potatoes stored where it's too warm and where there is too much light will turn green, says Clive Schaupmeyer, head of horticultural production section with the department in Brooks.

"Potatoes exposed to light during the growing season, or during handling and marketing may become green as a result of chlorophyll forming in the flesh," he says. "The green pigmentation is unsightly and reduces the aesthetic qualities of the tubers, and may increase waste because of extra peeling required. The natural or artificial light may also increase the level of natural flavor compounds in the potato and cause it to taste bitter. These components may also have some toxic effect on people."

Poor handling practices can occur at any stage of the potato marketing process, but most greening occurs in stores and at home.

Often produce displays at the grocery store are flooded with light during over-increasing store operating hours. Sometimes the displays are highlighted by flood lights. These factors combine to trigger the greening process which can continue at home.

"Retailers should be aware of the effects of light and take measures to reduce greening development," says the specialist with the Alberta Horticultural Research Center. "First, displays should be kept as cool as possible. This presents some problems in the public areas of stores, but if shipments are held in the back storage areas, they should be kept at 10° Celsius and in the dark.

(Cont'd)

Green potatoes can be problem for consumers (cont'd)

"Secondly, greening can be reduced if displays are shaded from direct lighting, especially spot lights."

The specialist says it would be best if the potato displays were covered during store hours. He suggests using attractive, clean, cloth covers - carrying a printed message about the contents underneath. He says even when the store is closed, but still lighted for night crews, the displays should be covered.

"When the potatoes arrive home they should be removed from their plastic polyethylene bag and placed in a doubled paper grocery bag and stored in a dark, and preferably cool place at 10 to 15° C," says Schaupmeyer. "The paper bags also reduce the chance of rot caused by excessive humidity in plastic bags."

Potatoes are a good source of nutrition says the specialist. They contain vitamin C, thiamine, iron, have less than one per cent fat and 11 per cent high quality protein. Potatoes with thin skins, especially newly-dug, potatoes develop green color more rapidly than mature potatoes with thick russetted skins, like those now coming out of storage.

Greening is usually confined to the outer three to four millimetres of skin and is removed by normal peeling. If however, the potatoes show green coloring deeper into the tuber they may have to be discarded since there is a possibility of stomach upset from eating green potatoes that have also turned bitter.

"A simple taste test is recommended if there is any doubt," says the specialist. "After the tubers are peeled, a thin slice can be chewed and removed from the mouth. A mild bitter taste that lasts several seconds might be noted; however the potatoes are all right. But if a strong peppery, burning sensation appears rapidly and persists for more than 20 to 30 seconds they should be discarded.

"Fortunately, potatoes that could cause stomach upset have this obnoxious taste and are not likely to be eaten in quantities to cause problems."

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Contact: Clive Schaupmeyer
362-3391

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AGRI-NEWS

January 19, 1987

CANADIANA
FEB 16 1987

For immediate release

This Week

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

January 19, 1987
For immediate release

Erosion has a hefty price tag

It could cost Alberta farmers nearly $90 million a year to replace top soil lost through water erosion. And poor land management is one of the major reasons the problem is severe, says a newly published report.

The economic impact of water erosion was calculated in a recent study conducted jointly by Alberta Agriculture's production and resource economics branch and Agriculture Canada.

It estimated the value of replacing the soil at $88.7 million, noting that the total loss to Albertans would be substantially higher considering all the secondary impacts throughout the economy.

Agricultural activity itself often makes the soil vulnerable to erosion. Poor land management makes the problem serious. The erosion referred to in the report is soil loss caused by rainfall or spring runoff from snow melt.

The study had two objectives, says Kathleen MacDonald-Date, a resource economist with Alberta Agriculture.

"We wanted to estimate the physical importance and distribution of erosion potential under various crop management schemes; and secondly we wanted to estimate the direct and indirect cost of this erosion to the economy of Alberta.

"The findings make it clear that effective erosion control will play an increasingly important role in the future viability of agriculture in Alberta.

Working with a model developed by Joe Tajek, with the soils survey office of Agriculture Canada, Tajek, MacDonald-Date and Ronald Desjardins calculated the amount of soil that would be carried away by water through normal farming practices, under a variety of crop selections.

At the extreme, the study showed as much as 24.9 tonnes of soil per hectare could be lost annually where there was no ground cover. This is compared to as little as 0.1 tonne of soil per hectare lost from a forested area.

(Cont'd)

Erosion has a hefty price tag (cont'd)

Five basic ground cover types were used in the analysis: no ground cover, small grains, canola, alfalfa and forest. Two additional cases were generated by weighting the ground cover types by the provincial crop mix and by individual municipal (or regional) level crop mixes.

The provincial crop mix is a factor arrived at by averaging all crops grown across Alberta. The municipal crop mix is a more specific factor reflecting regional crop differences. For example, in some counties and municipal districts in southern Alberta, the primary ground cover could be irrigated alfalfa, while in the north central part of the province it might be canola. These two crops might allow varying degrees of soil erosion.

"A theoretical economic estimate of the cost of erosion was derived using the value of topsoil lost," says MacDonald-Date. "This value was determined using the cost of fertilizer which would be required to replace the nutritive elements in the lost soil. The analysis was confined to the three main nutritive elements: nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus."

Results showed that the potential annual loss of nutrients due to erosion for agricultural lands ranged from 24.9 tonnes per hectare (t/ha) where there is continuously no ground cover to 0.1 t/ha for a forest cover with a poor canopy

"The municipal crop mix, which is a relatively close representation of the existing situation, produced a potential annual loss from erosion of 4.9 t/ha," she says. 'The provincial crop mix showed significantly greater losses of 5.3 t/ha, suggesting that there is a conscious adaptation of crop mix at the regional level to reduce erosion potential."

The study showed that the potential annual cost of erosion is $88.7 million. This is equivalent to 2.3 per cent of gross farm cash income or 3.3 per cent of cash operating expenses in 1984.

This estimate was based on the municipal crop mix and the area in each section of land with the dominant soil and landform characteristics.

(Cor t'd)

Erosion has a hefty price tag (cont'd)

"The results indicate that because erosion increases farm operating costs, it has major negative impacts on realized net farm income (income not adjusted for inventory changes)," says MacDonald-Date. "Conversely, over time, erosion control could have a significant positive impact on realized net farm income.

"While the estimated cost of erosion is equivalent to 2.3 per cent of gross farm cash receipts, it is equivalent to 14 per cent of realized net farm income. Thus, erosion control has the potential to increase realized net farm income by about 14 per cent. That is, increasing it from 16 per cent to 18 per cent of gross farm cash receipts."

Copies of the published report are available from Kathleen MacDonald-Date at 427-4026 or Joe Tajek at 420-4243.

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Contact: Kathleen MacDonald-Date
427-4026

January 19, 1987
For immediate release

Conference geared for cattlemen

Alberta cattlemen are urged to register for an upcoming conference in Edmonton aimed at providing advice to producers on getting the most out of their beef herd.

The first Alberta Beef Symposium, February 10 and 11 at the Edmonton Inn, will feature several speakers ranging from farmers to nutritionists and beef cattle reproductive specialists.

They will all be making their presentations around the theme reproductive efficiency in the beef cow herd.

"This is a conference for the cow-calf man," says conference chairman Don Milligan, a regional livestock specialist with Alberta Agriculture in Airdrie.

"We have some excellent speakers lined up who have some practical down-to-earth information for the producer," he says. "It will be a great opportunity for cattlemen to not only hear the experts and specialists talk about breeding and animal nutrition, but be able to question them about it as well."

Stan Wilson, of Nanton, president of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association will have a few remarks to open the conference February 10. He will be followed by several speakers over the next day and a half covering several subjects.

Dr. Richard Whitman of Great Falls, Montana is a specialist in reproduction efficiency and cattle nutrition. He will be talking about managing the cow herd, and preparing replacement heifers for early cycling and high conception.

Two Alberta producers will also share their philosophies on herd management. Barrhead area farmer Dale Greig will explain how he manages his 120-cow commercial Simmental herd with a limited breeding season, while Dan McKinnon of Airdrie will discuss his Beef Booster breed ranch and feedlot operation.

(Cont'd)

Conference geared for cattlemen (cont'd)

Guest speaker at the symposium banquet is Dr. Timothy Ball of the department of geography of the University of Winnipeg, speaking on weather and weather cycles.

"His topic may not be directly related to the theme of the conference," says Milligan. "But what else do farmers talk more about than the weather. He is an entertaining speaker and he certainly puts weather into perspective."

The second day of the conference the morning session will be devoted to discussion on nutrition and the need for trace minerals. Among the speakers are Dr. John Maas, a veterinarian from Oregon State University speaking on selenium; Dr. David Christensen, a ruminant nutritionist from the University of Saskatchewan speaking on copper and zinc; Dr. Larry Frischke, of the Poplar Grove Veterinarian Clinic in Innisfail, giving the veterinarian's perspective and Rick Corbett, with Alberta Agriculture's soils and animal nutrition lab in Edmonton giving the nutritionist's perspective.

Luncheon speaker is Kathy Keeler of the Beef Information Centre of the Alberta Cattle Commission who will set the record straight on the nutritional and health value of beef.

During the afternoon session Dr. Eugene Janzen, of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine will speak on managing the reproductive health of the beef cow herd, followed by Dr. Glenn Clouter, a reproductive physiologist with the Agriculture Canada research station in Lethbridge, talking about managing the herdsire for reproduction.

Dr. Howard Fredeen, a former researcher from Lacombe, who's accomplishments include development of the beef grading system in Canada, will provide a wrap up of the conference for producers.

Registration for the conference should be made as soon as possible. For more information or to register write the Alberta Beef Symposium, Alberta Cattle Commission, 241 , 2116 - 27 Avenue, N.E., Calgary, Alberta, T2E 7A6 or phone Gordon Mitchell at 291-4800 in Calgary.

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Contact: Don Milligan
948-5101

January 19, 1987
For immediate release

Shorter breeding season improves efficiency

Cattlemen should be able to make better use of their time and improve profits by cutting their livestock breeding season to near minimum, says one Alberta producer who grew tried of a three-month calving season.

The concept requires some different thinking says Dale Greig, but the system makes the beef operation more efficient and economical.

Over the last 10 years the Barrhead area farmer has reduced the breeding period for his commercial beef herd to 28 days (one heat cycle) for heifers and about 45 days (two heat cycles) for the mature cow herd. That in turn has reduced the calving season to about five weeks.

Any animals found open when the herd is pregnancy tested are shipped, regardless of past performance or expected potential.

"Over the years we've found if you keep a cow or heifer that is open for another year - decide to give her another chance - you'll run into problems with her again down the road," says Greig. "On one hand you feel you should keep them, but the facts are for some reason those cows didn't conceive and you are better off letting them go."

Alberta farmers will have a chance to hear more about Greig's management theory at the Alberta Beef Symposium, February 10 and 11 in Edmonton. Greig will be among several speakers who will address the seminar theme of reproductive efficiency in the beef cow herd.

Greig and his wife Maureen, run a 120 head commercial Simmental beef herd on their 750 acres of deeded and leased land, 13 kilometres west of Barrhead, which is northwest of Edmonton.

They bought the operation in 1974 and since 1980, Greig has been working with the reduced breeding period.

"When we began raising beef we had a longer breeding season and we'd be calving out for about three months, which was just too long," he says. "There is just myself and my wife looking after things and it seemed that too much of our time was taken up waiting for those cows to calve.

(Cont'd)

Shorter breeding season improves efficiency (cont'd)

"Now, there may be one or two stragglers but the calving is over in five weeks, which we feel is much more reasonable. I would say overall, the shorter breeding season has helped improve the entire operation."

The 42-year-old farmer says the limited breeding season helps produce calves with good weaning weights. This year his steer calves, at 250 days, averaged 750 pounds while the heifer calves averaged 740 pounds. The smallest calf in the bunch was 625 pounds.

Greig's cattle begin calving in late January and are finished by early March. The breeding season begins in mid-April with the bulls running with the heifers for one cycle and with the cows for two cycles.

Breeding is completed before the cattle are turned out on pasture for the summer. During the breeding season the animals are still being fed near the farmstead which allows Greig to keep a close watch on bull performance and spot any problems early.

He keeps his cattle in medium-to-good condition throughout the year and overwinters them with a mixture of good hay, silage and grain rations, as well as supplementation with vitamins and minerals.

"The baby heifer calves winter on hay and grain rations. The first-calf heifers winter with the cow herd, until calving time when I switch them to a mixture of roughage and grain ration and the cow herd is fed only good quality hay or silage, but no grain rations."

Along with calf weights Greig says the direct and indirect benefits from his management system include:

The calving period is over in a few weeks; calves are born earlier and are heavier in the fall; a group of calves appears very uniform in size which is appealing to buyers; there is improved fertility rate; there are fewer calving problems and animals have overall better health.

He says he can usually count on a 93 or 94 per cent conception rate among the cows and an 80 to 90 per cent conception rate among heifers.

Greig says it is important under this system to keep a close watch on the bulls during the breeding season to make sure there are no problems.

(Cont'd)

Shorter breeding season improves efficiency (cont'd)

"Because you only have one or two chances to get that animal bred, you have to make sure your bulls are working," he says. "We have two complete inspections of the herd every day and because the animals are close by when we are feeding we can keep tabs on them. If we find a bull that looks sick or is lame, we either treat him right away so he can get back into action or we put a replacement in."

Greig maintains the breeding ratio at one young bull for 20 heifers and one mature bull for every 45 to 50 cows.

"I believe from all aspects it is a good system," says the Barrhead area farmer. "You have to have a good performing battery of bulls, you have to keep your level of nutritional management up and you can't hestitate to cull an animal that is open.

"I can't say it's automatically going to make someone rich, but over the years we have seen a difference in our balance sheet which really is the bottom line."

For more information on the Alberta Beef Symposium contact your nearest district agriculturist or the Alberta Cattle Commission at 291-4800.

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Contact: Don Milligan
948-5101
Ross Gould
427-5335

January 19, 1987
For immediate release

Winter comes in like a lamb

Alberta farmers got November's weather in December says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

Average temperatures for December varied from -11.6 C at High Level, 8.7 C warmer than the long-term average, to -0.1 C at Lethbridge, 5.7 C warmer than normal.

Peter Dzikowski, agricultural weather resource specialist with the conservation and development branch in Edmonton, says the above normal temperatures reported for December are more typical of November.

Grande Prairie, Edson, Red Deer and Coronation reported monthly average temperatures of -6 to -7 C, which are about 7 C warmer than normal. He says the warmer weather means space heating costs for December should be about 25 per cent below normal.

Precipitation amounts in December were very low, ranging from 1.5 and 1.9 mm at Red Deer and Calgary, only 10 per cent of normal, to a high of 15.6 mm at High Level, 60 per cent of normal.

December weather was unusually warm and dry, causing no particular hardships for agriculture. However, Dzikowski says the lack of snow leaves the soil vulnerable to wind erosion.

"This could lead to the loss of fertile, productive topsoils from exposed, bare fields on windy days," he says.

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Contact: Peter Dzikowski
422-4385

January 19, 1987
For immediate release

Don't blame ghetto blaster for teen hearing loss

The countryside may be peaceful but it is anything but quiet, as a recent study shows farm youngsters working around noisy equipment may suffer some hearing loss.

A recent U.S. study shows teen-aged children who help on the family farm are showing signs of noise-induced hearing loss to about the same degree as would be found in adult farmers.

And Solomon Kyeremanteng, a farm safety specialist with Alberta Agriculture in Edmonton, says there is every reason to assume the same risk exists in Alberta.

The Wisconsin study showed that many teenagers were putting in between 40 and 60 hours a week working around noisy equipment and machinery.

"Many Alberta farm teenagers are exposed to the noise of combines, tractors, blowers, grinders and elevators," says Kyeremanteng, director of the department's farm safety program. "I don't think a separate study here would tell us anything different. These noises can affect hearing in teenagers or anyone else. It is important that ear protection devices be worn."

The Wisconsin report was made at the end of the first year of a four-year study of the hearing ability of farm children of high school age, compared with that of non-farm students.

Information has not yet been collected from a non-farm group. But preliminary information from testing of about 500 students enrolled in vocational agriculture classes at 12 Wisconsin high schools indicates some hearing loss.

Researchers expecting to find teenagers with normal hearing, were surprised with the incidence of hearing loss. Preliminary data from the tested farm students indicated high-frequency hearing loss in both ears with more of a loss in the left ear than in the right.

(Cont'd)

Don't blame ghetto blaster for teen hearing loss (cont'd)

In addition, they found that senior high students have a more significant hearing loss than junior high students. This suggests that hearing loss is progressive.

Researchers also found a correlation between the number of hours a student works on the farm each week and the degree of their hearing loss, with students working longer hours having the most significant loss.

Kyeremanteng suggests any farm teenagers suspecting a hearing problem should have their ears checked by their family doctor.

"It will be interesting to see the final results of the study at the end of four years," says Kyeremanteng. "But I consider the preliminary findings an early warning to farm families here. The message is that the everyday noises around the farm work place can be a risk to hearing and protective measures should be taken."

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Contact: Solomon Kyeremanteng
427-2186

January 19, 1987
For immediate release

Course offered beginner beekeepers

Anyone interested in learning beekeeping as either a hobby or a career should register for a short course offered in Edmonton in February by Alberta honey producers.

The beginner beekeeping course is geared for anyone interested in bees, regardless of their background, says Derrick Johnston of the Alberta Honey Producers Co-operative Ltd.

"This course is for the hobbyist, someone interested in being a commercial honey producer, or someone already involved in the business who wants a refresher course," he says. "Beginners don't need to own land or anything like that, they can even be apartment dwellers in the city."

The course is taught by Edmonton area beekeeper Phil Baril. It runs from 7 to 9 p.m. over four days - February 2, 9, 16, and 23

Johnston says the sessions will introduce an individual to the "A to Zs of beekeeping", and provide them with enough information to set up their own hives this spring.

By offering the course in February it allows participants time to order bees and equipment before April.

The course will be held at the Beemaid Honey main office at 16650 - 111 Ave. in Edmonton. There is a $30 registration fee which must be paid by the end of January.

For more information contact Derrick Johnston or Bernie Rousseau at 489-5577.

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Contact: Derrick Johnston
489-5577

January 19, 1987
For immediate release

It's not too early for crop planning

While the work may change seasonally farm planning should continue year round with winter being a good time for farm decision makers to concentrate on making a written plan.

Sometimes it's difficult to know where to start but many farmers can begin by considering their crop choices, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture. Making a separate budget for each crop showing variations such as different levels of fertilizer application, seeding rate and weed chemicals provides a good start for estimating yields, prices and costs.

Craig Edwards, farm management economist of the farm business management branch in Olds, says using a crop choice worksheet is helpful.

A recently published fact sheet, "Planning With Crop Choice Worksheets", (Agdex 815-2), is available from Alberta Agriculture to provide a worksheet and demonstrate its usefulness.

The fact sheet was provided as a insert in the December issue of Country Guide magazine. Anyone who missed it can get a copy from their local extension office or from The Publications Office, Alberta Agriculture, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5T6.

"Planning activities and developing written plans is time well spent," says Edwards. "Farmers should make several copies of the worksheet before using it, so they can use several sheets for every crop they consider growing.

"Use separate sheets to show a high level of inputs, a medium level and a low level. They can be used to compare expected returns (yield times price) over expected variable costs for each crop. Comparing different levels of intensity of production after calculating expected yields and prices for each level will help in the decision of how much to attempt to grow, how to grow the crop and what to grow".

(Cont'd)

It's not too early for crop planning (cont'd)

The worksheets are designed for farmers to use their own estimates of expected revenues and input costs per crop. The sheets give no typical costs but provide a format as a reminder of all the costs that might be included in the estimates.

"The factsheet also provides explanations for using the worksheets to advantage in crop planning," says the economist. "The worksheets, when completed for each crop, provide the basic cost calculations required to make decisions. When the decisions are made, the cost calculations can be summarized for further steps of the planning process leading to a complete farm plan for the following year including a projected cash flow."

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Contact: Craig Edwards
556-4248

January 19, 1987
For immediate release

Vegetable sales set record

Alberta vegetable growers set a record for produce sales in 1986 topping the $5 million mark for the first time in 11 years.

Sales from the 1986 harvest are expected to reach $5.5 million, says Sharon Chmielewski, manager of the Alberta Fresh Vegetable Marketing Board in Lethbridge.

She credits a good growing season and an expansion of crop varieties and markets for helping growers reach a new sales high.

"It's going to be a record year for us not only because the weather co-operated but also because many of the growers have expanded their acreages and we've tapped into new markets," she says. "We're also trying some different crops which also improve our opportunities.

The marketing board represents all the vegetable growers in the province who sell their produce through regular channels for commercial retail.

The sales figure do not include receipts of market gardeners or farmers' markets which sell directly to consumers.

Alberta Agriculture vegetable specialist, Phil Dixon, in Edmonton says the increased sales also reflect greater confidence among wholesalers and consumers in Alberta-grown produce.

"The wholesalers are becoming more a part of the Alberta vegetable industry," says Dixon. "The vegetable industry is growing and is still establishing itself, but wholesalers who have traditionally dealt with California growers are recognizing the high quality produce grown here."

Dixon says in-store displays and other marketing promotions, such as the Better Buy Alberta campaign, are also making consumers more aware of the locally grown produce.

The specialist says growers are also searching out new markets which contributes to sales.

"Growers learn where these markets are and make more sales," he sales. "They may be small markets but they all add up."

(Cont'd)

Vegetable sales set record (cont'd)

Along with continued production of cabbage and carrots, growers have also expanded acreages and added new crops, says Chmielewski.

Broccoli production was increased by about 68 acres in 1986 while radishes were increased by 16 acres. Green and yellow bean production doubled to 51 acres in 1986 and cucumber production quadrupled to 105 acres.

The first acreages of leeks were planted in 1986, grossing about $45,000 in sales and a trial crop of brussel sprouts, grown in 1986, may be expanded in 1987.

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Contact: Sharon Chmielewski
327-0447
Phil Dixon
973-3351

Editor's Note

Attached is a two part article on a recent survey conducted by Alberta Agriculture on tile drainage in the province.

The first part "Farmers provide answers on tile drainage" is an overview of the survey and the value of tile drainage across Alberta.

The second article "Most drainage projects in dryland areas" is a more detailed look at the results of the survey.

The articles are geared to be run together or independently, depending on your needs and space limitations.

January 19, 1987
For immediate release

Farmers provide answers on tile drainage

At a time when so much is said about drought, it may seem a contradiction to be worried about too much moisture, but more Alberta producers are turning to tile drainage to improve their farming operations.

Subsurface drainage (tile drainage) isn't as big an industry in Alberta as it is in other provinces, but with an estimated 11 million acres of wetland in the agricultural areas of Alberta, there is no shortage of need.

The main limitation in today's market is the economics, say specialists with Alberta Agriculture. And they expect with an improved economic climate the rate of subsurface drainage installations, from Peace River to Manyberries, will increase.

Tile drainage projects in Alberta are primarily involved with getting rid of nuisance surface ponding and ground water. North of Drumheller most drainage projects involve sloughs and high water tables, while south of Drumheller drainage work relates mostly to irrigation projects.

The department's Drainage Branch has just completed a survey of Alberta farmers who use subsurface drainage. The majority say they are happy with the way drainage systems were installed. Assessment is still underway to determine how well the systems work and their cost/benefit.

Brook Harker, head of the departments drainage reclamation, says the survey provides the department with useful information about the type and scale of tile drainage projects in Alberta. The results will assist farmers who are thinking about installing tile drainage.

Tile drainage involves burying perforated plastic pipe (similar to weeping tile) in field areas where too much water is a problem. The excess water enters the pipe through the perforations and is carried away to a surface drain.

(Con't)

Farmers provide answers on tile drainage (cont'd)

Harker says farmers want to get rid of excess ground moisture for several reasons. Drainage under irrigation and many dryland areas helps prevent or reduce soil salinity problems. It can help dry those wet areas in a field which make it difficult to get around with machinery and drainage ca. bring more crop land into production.

About 300 farmers have developed 700 on-farm drainage sites in the province. Most of the sites average between 10 and 30 acres. Harker says a site refers to project areas generally having a separate discharge outlet.

A farmer may have more than one drainage project on his land, ranging from a single line that will dry up a small slough to an extensive grid system covering many acres.

The drainage branch serves as a co-ordinator for subsurface drainage information. It provides advice to farmers and works with the department's conservation and development branch, irrigation branch, regional engineers and other authorities in developing drainage system designs. It also is involved in a research and development role in the field of subsurface drainage.

The branch's survey answered several questions for the specialists, and clearly indicated that farmers were satisfied with the way drainage systems have been installed. Only seven per cent of sites had unresolved installation problems.

"This high level of overall satisfactions indicates farmers are pleased with current drainage installation practices and do not see them as a limitation to further drainage expansion within the province," says Harker.

A copy of the survey report is available from Harker at Alberta Agriculture, Agriculture Centre, Lethbridge, Alberta, T1J 4C7 or call 381-5159.

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Contact: Brook Harker
381-5159

January 19, 1987
For immediate release

Most drainage projects in dryland areas

Most of the land being tile drained by Alberta farmers is in the dryland areas of the province, says a survey conducted by Alberta Agriculture.

Sixty per cent of the 700 on-farm drainage sites are outside of irrigation districts says a report prepared by the department's drainage branch.

The survey also says the majority of farmers are satisfied with the way their subsurface drainage system was installed.

The drainage branch received 242 replies from irrigation and dryland farmers from across the province who were asked to provide details about their drainage systems.

The main findings of the study, says Brook Harker with the department's drainage branch, provide information related to: drainage location; problem causes, investigation/design methods; typical drainage system characteristics; annual installation trends; and overall farmer satisfaction with drainage project completion.

Subsurface drainage involves burying perforated plastic pipe (similar to weeping tile) in areas of a field where too much water is a problem. The moisture enters the pipe through the perforations and is carried away to a surface drain.

Dryland farmers indicate a large part of their drainage problem is due to surface ponding - more so north of Drumheller. Natural groundwater contributions to the water table are the other major problem on dryland.

Within irrigation districts farmers believe over half of drainage problems are caused by canal seepage and seepage related combinations.

(Con't)

Most drainage projects in dryland areas (cont'd)

Groundwater and natural high water tables are the other major problem about one-third of the time.

The study shows only five percent of farmers believe their own irrigation practices are the major cause of the problem.

Farmers say about half of irrigation drainage investigation/designs are performed by government specialists, the remaining half by contractors. Contractors do most of the investigation work in dryland areas. According to the drainage branch, much of the province's drainage investigation resources have been located adjacent to irrigation districts, which explains why there has been more government input there. These resources are now being expanded province-wide.

Half of all site investigations involve simply walking over the affected area, the survey shows. Harker says with the type of investment being made by the farmer, projects should be given more than an eye-ball assessment. A thorough assessment of soil composition and other factors should be made.

"Only about a third of the investigations involve drilling for soil textural and chemical samples," he says. "Drainage branch experience has shown that this lack of soils data may limit drainage performance where soil characteristics are critical to optimum drainage design."

Farmers say less than half of drainage systems are constructed according to a final drafted plan. One-third of drainage systems are constructed according to field calculations only.

There are two main types of drainage systems that a farmer can use, depending on need. The grid system involves a network of tiles spaced regularly to intensively drain a problem area. The other simpler random system involves only a few buried lines within the lowest field areas and is often used in slough drainage.

The study found half of all irrigation systems are grid installations. Dryland installations are predominantly random/slough systems, with some grid systems. Survey results show slough drainage systems dominate north of Drumheller.

(Cont't)

Most drainage projects in dryland areas (cont'd)

About 70 per cent of drainage sites are less than 30 acres (12 ha) in size. Most projects contain less than 1,500 metres of drainage tubing. Over 90 per cent of all subsurface drainage outlets are gravity free-flow. A gravity outlet is preferable if the receiving channel is deep enough to keep the outlet free from obstruction.

Fall is the busiest season for drainage installation according to landowners, with close to half of all drainage being installed then. Most sites requiring drainage are driest in the fall. Other busy times are spring for irrigated land and summer for dryland drainage.

"The annual rate of drainage installation in southern Alberta has declined lately - likely due to the recent drought and economic climate," says Harker.

Farmers indicated that over 90 per cent of drainage installations were completed to their satisfaction. Less than 10 per cent of sites are deemed by farmers to have unresolved installation problems.

For more information about this drainage survey or the detailed final report, contact Brook Harker of the Drainage Branch, Alberta Agriculture, Agriculture Centre, Lethbridge, Alberta, T1J 4C7 or call 381-5159.

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Contact: Brook Harker
381-5159

January 19, 1987
For immediate release

Are you retired or just plain tired?

A change in federal law gives farmers an option of when they can retire and how much they will receive in benefits from the Canada Pension Plan (CPP).

Under the new plan, farmers between 60 and 65 may be able to hang up the old tractor keys earlier than expected, while those waiting until they are between 65 and 70 to retire may make more money.

"In a nutshell, the government has decided to offer a type of early retirement incentive for individuals between the ages of 60 to 65," says Alberta Agriculture farm management economist Merle Good.

"Specifically, the federal government and the provinces have agreed to allow a flexible retirement, where contributors to the CPP can have the option of withdrawing retirement benefits as early as age 60.

"They will receive reduced benefits however, if they begin receiving their retirement pension prior to age 65. They will enjoy increased benefits if they delay receiving them after age 65 and as late as age 70. This new rule took effect as of January 1 of this year."

To help explain how the new plan works, Good has provided the following questions and answers:

1. By how much does my retirement pension get reduced if I choose to receive the income before reaching age 65?

For each month between the date that your pension begins and your 65th birthday, the benefit is reduced by 0.5 per cent per month. For example, if you begin receiving your pension at age 60, your monthly pension will be reduced by 30 to 70 per cent (5 years x 12 months = 60 months x 5% = 30%). Alternatively, for each month past age 65 to age 70 that you withhold receiving your CPP benefits, the monthly benefit is increased by 0.5 per cent.

(Cont'd)

Are you retired or just plain tired? (cont'd)

2. Are there any qualifications that I must meet in order to be able to receive my retirement pension early?

In order to qualify, you must establish that you have ceased employment or self-employment at the time that the pension starts and that your annual earnings do not exceed the maximum Canada Pension Plan Retirement Pension. The 1987 monthly rate is $521.52, which means that the annual amount of employment or self-employment earnings cannot exceed $6,258.24.

3. Are there any points that need to be clarified as to what constitutes paid employment or self-employment earnings?

It appears that the earnings are the same for those that qualify for the present Canada Pension Plan contribution level - in other words, employment income or net income from a business. This definition of earned income would not include interest, dividends or rental payments that could be received from various investments. In farming, therefore, a cash rental arrangement and/or crop share agreement does not form the basis for Canada Pension Plan contributions and thus does not form part of the 1987 limit of $6,258.24.

4. What happens if my earned income increases after I have applied for the early retirement pension?

Once you qualify, you can continue to receive your retirement pension even if your earnings subsequently increase above the limit. The government appears to have conceded that the administration requirement to continually audit the earnings and adjusting yearly benefits of every individual who decides to take advantage of the flexible retirement option is too prohibitive. They are concerned only with the earnings and the intent of the taxpayer at the time the request for an early pension is submitted.

(Cont'd)

Are you retired or just plain tired (cont'd)

5. Can I get an estimate of my retirement pension before I decide to apply?

Yes, it is possible to receive an estimate of your Canada Pension Plan benefits by completing an estimate request form available from your local CPP office. Many farmers who are approaching age 60 will have received in the last year a statement outlining their contributions and their expected retirement pension at age 65 based on a similar level of contributions.

6. At what age should I take my retirement pension?

The answer depends upon individual circumstances, however, the main points to consider are as follows:

a) whether or not you are eligible to continue to contribute to the plan
b) if eligible, are your last few years of income going to reduce or increase your retirement pension
c) your potential income from farming, rental of property and Canada Pension Plan benefits.

"In my view, a classic candidate would be a farmer who has contributed at a relatively high level throughout the plan and is projecting that his eligible income level and thus contributions will be substantially on the decline," says Good. "This decline could be due to a business transfer to the next generation and/or decreased net farm income because of low commodity prices."

In this scenario, the farmer could be receiving a combination of rent from his son or daughter, investment income and a reduced amount of earned income from the business. The result could be a level of retirement benefits that may be greater by going for the early pension option, rather than waiting until age 65 and having those last few years reduce CPP contributions lowering his retirement pension.

(Cont'd)

Are you retired or just plain tired (cont'd)

Each individual will have to determine if he or she is eligible to participate in the flexible retirement option and then decide whether an application for early retirement benefits should be submitted.

"One important thing to remember is that if you change your mind after you have applied for your Canada Pension Plan benefits you have six months to write and withdraw your application," says Good. "You will have to repay the total amount of benefits received and submit the required contribution on any pensionable earnings you had while you received the pension. The best advice is therefore to analyze before acting."

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Contact: Merle Good
556-4237

January 19, 1987
For immediate release

Land clearing rates now available

The results of the 1986 survey of custom land clearing and breaking rates have been released by the farm business management branch of Alberta Agriculture.

Some 112 operators from across the province responded to the survey, says Garth Nickorick a farm management economist with the department.

Conducted in November, the survey shows brushing and piling charges range from $70 to $80 per hour from the Calgary area to Montana border for work performed by crawler tractors such as D7, D8 Cats with a dozer blade.

For central Alberta (Red Deer, Barrhead, Cold Lake) rates surveyed indicate $50 to $60 per hour for D6, $70 to $80 per hour for D7 and $75 to $100 per hour for D8.

Northern Alberta (Peace River - Grande Prairie) rates were $70 per hour for D7 and $85 to $95 for D8 type machinery for brushing and piling.

In addition to brushing and piling the machinery is charged out at the same rates for most secondary clearing and breaking operations.

First pass land breaking with a heavy duty disc ranged from $6 to $8 per acre in the south, to $15 to $20 per acre in the north.

Those using rotovators are charging $85 to $125 per hour for the service.

Root raking rates vary from $11 to $28 per acre. Rock picking costs are $65 to $90 per hour.

On a per acre basis, brushing and piling costs are $100 to $120 per acre. The necessary repiling, discing, root and rock picking and cultivating work roughly doubled that cost.

(Cont'd)

Land clearing rates now available (cont'd)

"Dugout construction charges are commonly $60 to $80 per hour for crawler tractors," says Nickorick. "Those operators working with scrapers do charge a higher hourly wage, yet when payment is made based on the volume of dirt moved, the rates are comparable. Rates per volume are $.60 to $1 per cubic yard."

Land levelling rates were commonly quoted at $.75 to $.80 per cubic yard of dirt moved.

"Rates do vary reflecting economic and land conditions," says the economist. "Such things as terrain, type of bush, distance, size of job, capacity of machinery do affect the actual rate for a particular job."

For more information and a copy of the survey, contact Nickorick, at the Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0.

Contact: Garth Nickorick
556-4247

January 19, 1987
For immediate release

Seminar planned for High Prairie

Northwestern Alberta farmers are invited to a seminar in High Prairie in February that will look at the present and future of agriculture.

Several speakers will be featured during the February 5 and 6 conference planned around the theme, "Agriculture: Today and Tomorrow. Guests will include Alberta Agriculture Minister Peter Elzinga and Professor Murray Hawkins of the department of rural economy of the University of Alberta.

Specialists will discuss topics of concern to farmers, including: beef cattle production and marketing; grains and oilseed production and marketing; alternate crops; stress management; farm safety; farm finance; leasing and buying farm machinery and computers on the farm.

Pre-registration is required by January 28. For further information on the conference contact Brent Kolodychuk at Box 845, High Prairie, Alberta or phone 523-3505.

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Contact: Gabe Tajcnar
523-6504

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AGRI-NEWS

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January 26, 1987

For immediate release

This Week

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

January 26, 1987
For immediate release

Thousands of acres affected by wind erosion

As many as 750,000 acres of farm land in southern Alberta have been affected by erosion so far this winter as winds up to 100 kilometres per hour whip across unprotected fields.

Specialists with Alberta Agriculture say the wind erosion problem increases following a drought year because there is less plant material available to hold soil in place. The problem also increases in a crop-fallow rotation where a field only grows a crop every second year.

"An estimated 500,000 to 750,000 acres of topsoil have suffered significant wind erosion during two windy periods thus far this winter", says John Timmermans of Airdrie, a soil salinity and conservation specialists with the department. "The weekend of January 9 and 10 saw wind speeds of 90 to 100 km/h in the Calgary to Lethbridge area.

"An increased likelihood of wind erosion is one of the consequences of drought during the growing season. In areas where the crop-fallow rotation is widely used, the potential for wind erosion increases dramatically in the second winter after the last crop."

The specialist says this is because the poor crops due to drought in 1985 left low levels of crop residue. This residue has to protect the soil surface for about 21 months or until the soil is again protected by a new crop in June 1987.

"Tillage to control weeds during the summerfallow period has reduced the residue cover and level of protection, to the point where many fields are virtually wide open to wind erosion," says Timmermans. "Most of the acres which were eroded so far this year are 1986 fallow acres poorly protected or not protected at all by a surface cover of crop residue."

(Cont'd)

Clouds of blowing top soil, like those shown in this photo taken in the Municipal District of Rockyview, have been a problem for southern Alberta farmers for the past two years. Wind erosion is robbing the land.

Other soils which were eroded lie within one of the following different categories:

- Irrigated land. Sugar beet and potato production in southern Alberta involves the use of intensive tillage which burys all residue to prepare for planting the next crop. These crops leave very little residue after harvest, to start with.
- Fall seeded crops. The rains which delayed harvest last fall delayed seeding of winter wheat, and the cool weather in fall delayed its growth. Many acres of winter wheat seeded on summerfallow have not grown to the point where it affords adequate protection. Some fields seeded to fall rye earlier was damaged by grasshoppers, and is therefore also suffering damage by erosion.

(Cont'd)

Thousands of acres affected by wind erosion (cont'd)

- Soils damaged last spring. Some districts suffered extensive wind erosion so severe that the crops were completely destroyed. Where these soils have not been repaired or cropped since, they are now eroding even more.
- Soils broken out of grass. Some fields in southern Alberta were broken with tillage that broke down clumps of sod to the extent that they have eroded severely already this winter.

For more information on the wind erosion problem contact Timmermans at the Alberta Agriculture regional office in Airdrie at 948-8539.

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Contact: John Timmermans
948-8539

January 26, 1987
For immediate release

Emergency measures can save top soil

Farmers faced with the reality that their top soil is blowing away can employ some emergency control measures to help minimize the loss.

Ideally steps should be taken before freeze up to prevent wind erosion, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture, but if that isn't possible, stop gap measures can be employed.

"Management options to prevent wind erosion are not generally available in winter," says John Timmermans, a soil salinity and conservation specialist with the department in Airdrie. "Instead, emergency control measures to slow down and reduce the damage as it is happening or is very likely to happen should be used."

Timmermans says between 500,000 and 750,000 acres of farm land, mostly in southern Alberta, have been affected by wind erosion so far this year and the risk of more erosion will continue for several months.

The specialist says to reduce wind erosion at this time of year, any available farmyard or liquid manure, loose or baled straw can be spread on trouble spots to hold down soil.

Tillage with spikes deep enough to bring up clods or lumps of frozen soils at least 10 cm high can be effective. When frost prevents penetration, heavier equipment such as ripping shanks on caterpillars or road maintainers can be used.

Lister shovels are also an effective tool when frost has receded a few inches from the surface. A Lister shovel is like a miniature ditcher which can be mounted on the back gang of shanks on any heavy duty cultivator.

"Although the extent of wind erosion this year is not as severe as last years, the time is still early," he says. "The threat of wind erosion must be dealt with until new crops emerge in June - five months from now."

(Cont'd)

Emergency measures can save top soil (cont'd)

Topsoil carried by strong winds in the Municipal District of Rockyview near Calgary turns day into darkness.

Timmermans says there is some good news. The wet fall which delayed harvest and down-graded crop yields also prevented tillage which might have put many more acres at risk. Also, many farmers are successfully managing crop residues by reduced tillage and substitution of some tillage by the use of herbicides.

"Many more farmers this winter are out on their land, taking whatever steps they can in reducing the threat of serious wind erosion damage," he says.

Farmers considering available alternatives to lessen wind erosion damage on their land are urged to contact their agricultural fieldman, district agriculturist, or Timmermans at the Alberta Agriculture regional office in Airdrie at 948-8539.

Contact: John G. Timmermans
948-8539

January 26, 1987
For immediate release

Women's Institutes assist with farm safety survey

Alberta Women's Institute members will be working with Alberta Agriculture to determine how provincial elementary schools use farm safety education material.

The W.I. and the department will launch a joint study of the farm safety rural school program in February and March.

They will ask how many schools in Alberta use the popular Farm Safety Child's Guide and find out how this material is used in the classroom.

"This guide has been produced for the past 10 years," says Solomon Kyeremanteng, manager of the department's farm safety program. "But we have never done this type of study before. We believe that the child's guide is well respected and well used, but we have never really done a survey of the schools and instructors who handle the material."

The guide, an activity booklet designed around the theme of farm safety, has been incorporated into studies in many Alberta classrooms. Some 50,000 copies of the guide are published and distributed each year. Using posters and essays created by students the guide presents students with problems and quizzes on a variety of farm safety matters.

The Women's Institutes, which has been a long-time supporter of the farm safety program, will co-ordinate the province-wide survey under the direction of Dorothy Williams, of Cessford, Alberta, and will run from mid-February to the end of March.

Institute members will contact participating schools to obtain responses to the survey questions. The results of the questionnaire will be used to determine if changes in the format or presentation of the child's guide are needed.

For further information on the survey contact Solomon Kyeremanteng in Edmonton, at 427-2186 or Dorothy Williams at 566-3751.

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Contact: Solomon Kyeremanteng
427-2186

January 26, 1987
For immediate release

Time to book pastureland for 1987

Cattlemen looking for pasture for their livestock should find rental rates relatively stable this year, according to an Alberta Agriculture survey.

The report prepared by Garth Nickorick of the department's farm business management branch in Olds, says plans are already being made for renting pastureland this season.

"In 1986 farmers and ranchers experienced higher prices for calves and grass cattle than had been the case a few years earlier," he says. "The expectation for prices in 1987 is favorable.

"Pasture rental rates have held steady the past few years. This is expected to continue in 1987."

Following is a quick review of the rents paid in 1986.

Market prices show rentals in the short grass prairie area of southern Alberta being $2.50 to $5 per acre. Around Calgary, prices generally range from $10 to $20 per acre.

On the animal unit month (AUM) basis, southern prairie rates range from $6 to $12 per AUM, while the area around Calgary is $10 to $15 per AUM.

"This average of $10 per animal unit month is not uncommon throughout the whole province," says Nickorick.

CASH RENT - PASTURE

Location	Most Common - 1986
Medicine Hat/Lethbridge/Claresholm	$6.00-$12.00/AUM $3.33-$9.38/ac
Calgary/Olds	$10.00-$15.00/AUM $11.00-$20.00/ac
Red Deer/Camrose/Coronation	$10.00-$12.00/AUM $8.00-$18.00/ac

(Cont'd)

Time to book pastureland for 1987 (cont'd)

CASH RENT - PASTURE

Location	Most Common - 1986
Wainwright/Vermilion/Two Hills	$5.00-$14.00/AUM $6.00-$9.00/ac
Edmonton/Barrhead	$7.00-$10.00/AUM $7.00-$12.00/ac
Peace River/Grande Prairie	$6.25-$8.23/AUM $3.38-$14.00/ac

A copy of the 1986 rental survey for specific areas is available from the farm business management branch in Olds. For further information, contact your district agriculturist or the farm business management branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0.

Contact: Garth Nickorick
(403) 556-4247

January 26, 1987
For immediate release

World grain prices will affect land rental rates

Both land owners and renters are expected to be under the economic gun this year as world grain prices remain depressed.

Farmers renting crop land will be sharpening their pencils to figure out what they can afford to pay while grain prices are low, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture. And this economy will force landlords to review their going rates.

"Plans are already being made for renting land this season," says Garth Nickorick with the farm business management branch in Olds. "In 1986 farmers heard rumblings of an impending trade war the Europeans and the Americans were embarking on. In 1987 the rumblings are reality. The prospects are less than stellar for record high prices for the next year's crop. Concern has been expressed by renters and landlords alike as to the appropriate rental level for cropland in 1987.

"It is expected that landlords will be under pressure to lower their share of the rent for the 1987 crop. Whether they drop the rent will depend on the local demand and local crop conditions last year."

Renters are faced with grain prices that leave little room for returns over and above variable costs and labor, says the farm economist. Their plan of using profit from rental land to help the home place grow has been dashed.

"The revenue from 60 bushels of barley per acre at the present prices ($1.40/bu) is $84 per acre," says Nickorick. Suppose that expenses for seed, fuel, fertilizer and chemical total $45 per acre. The return for the time, effort and risk is $39 per acre. The renter will be very careful how much of this he is willing to give up in rent payments. Suppose the renter wants $2,500 out of the quarter or he will not take it on, this leaves $23 per acre for the rent."

The following is a quick review of the rents paid in 1986.

The rental range for irrigated land was $33 to $90 per acre with an average of $63 per acre.

(Cont'd)

World grain prices will affect land rental rates (cont'd)

Dryland rates south of the Trans-Canada Highway averaged $25 per acre within a $12 to $30 per acre range. Rental rates in the Olds/Red Deer, Wetaskiwin/Coronation areas commonly range from $28 to $34 per acre with top land bringing $45 to $50 an acre.

The Wainwright/Vermilion/Two Hills area ranges from $20 to $35 per acre with the average being $27 per acre.

Peace River/Grande Prairie area rentals range from $15 to $20 per acre with the most common being $18 per acre.

A copy of the 1986 rental survey for your area is available from the farm business management branch in Olds. For further information, contact your district agriculturist or the farm business management branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0.

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Contact: Garth Nickorick
(403) 556-4247

January 26, 1987
For immediate release

Growers sought for saskatoon orchards

It is doubtful that Western Canada's famous amber waves will turn into a bobbing blue sea, but horticultural researchers say orchards of saskatoon berries could take root on as many as 10,000 acres of prairie soil in the next few years.

It's a relatively new fruit crop, but it has potential to become a viable moneymaker for operators tuned into horticultural work, says a federal plant pathologist and horticulturist.

Dr. John Davidson, with the Agriculture Canada research station at Beaverlodge in northwestern Alberta, says suitable varieties of the native shrub have been developed which will prosper from British Columbia to Manitoba.

It is expected that most of the acreages of saskatoon will be planted in B.C. and the Peace region of Alberta, but he says there are suitable climatic zones all along the foothills and across the northern and eastern parkland zone of the prairies. The berries are already in commercial production in three provinces.

So far about 500 acres of berry shrubs have been planted in Alberta and about 100 acres are already in fruit production. He says industry predictions of eventually having 10,000 acres in production may be a "very conservative underestimate".

Davidson says there appears to be ready markets for saskatoon berries. The greatest drawback facing the industry is finding enough growers.

The horticulturists says saskatoons are best suited to the small acreage owner who has some background or at least a strong interest in horticulture or specialty crops.

"We've found that regular grain farmers don't adapt well to saskatoon production," says Davidson. "It's a different type of agricultural work."

(Cont'd)

Growers sought for saskatoon orchards (cont'd)

Five acres is about the minimum size for a viable operation with some operators planting between 40 and 60 acres.

The horticulturist says the start-up investment may detour some growers. Along with the cost of land, the saskatoon shrubs must be grown under a trickle or drip irrigation system and there is no commercial crop production for the first five years. He says there is about a 50 per cent drop out rate among saskatoon growers.

He says anyone planning to grow saskatoons should consider planting a temporary fruit or vegetable cash crop along with the shrubs to provide some income while the crop is maturing.

"Saskatoons should be planted in rows that are 15 to 18 feet apart. For those first few years this provides ample room for some other annual crop to be grown and harvested," says Davidson.

Once the shrubs are actually producing fruit for sale, the markets are relatively good.

For further information on the saskatoon industry contact Davidson at Beaverlodge at 354-2212.

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Contact: Dr. John Davidson
354-2212

January 26, 1987
For immediate release

Markets available for berry industry

Although saskatoon berry production is a relatively new fruit industry,work on developing commercial varieties has been ongoing for nearly 70 years.

Starting in 1918, work at the Agriculture Canada research station at Beaverlodge has continued to develop varieties of saskatoon shrubs suited to the western climate.

Dr. John Davidson, a plant pathologist and horticulturist at Beaverlodge says more growers are now needed to boost production, making processing economical and to increase supply for available markets.

There are about 500 acres in Alberta planted to saskatoons and about 100 acres already in fruit production. It is estimated B.C. and the prairie provinces have a potential to grown about 10,000 acres of saskatoon shrubs.

The industry established itself in the Peace region in 1972 and has gradually grown over the years. In 1985, growers in the southwest Peace region formed the Peace Country Fruit Producers' Co-operative which obtained a grant to build a fruit processing plant.

Located near the community of Hythe, the plant went into operation early enough in 1986 to test run about three tons of berries through the locally built cleaning and grading equipment, and to quick freeze both ungraded and graded samples.

While pick-your-own is the most popular operation, Davidson says both local and international markets are also available for processed fruit.

"At this moment, most of the acreage in production is for pick-your-own operations close to major population centres," says Davidson. "Nearly all the new acreage, however, is for a co-operative industry that will be marketing saskatoons not only in Canada but in Europe, the United States and the Orient as soon as their is sufficient production."

(Cont'd)

Markets available for berry industry (cont'd)

The industry is expected to concentrate on the fresh fruit and fresh frozen markets for its top grades, says the specialist. Two outfits now sell a jelly and a syrup through supermarkets, a third sells a jam through specialty stores. A winery specializing in saskatoon and honey wines opened in November in Grande Prairie.

Davidson says orchards do not need to be located near processing plants. He says as long as quantities are sufficient, crops can be shipped for processing on reefer trucks.

"The impetus to develop a co-operative industry inevitably will come from growers too far from major markets to operate substantial pick-your-owns," he says. "At present these are primarily in the Peace River region, partly because of the work of the Beaverlodge Research Station and partly because the Peace is the best area for growing saskatoons that we are currently aware of."

Along with the foothills country and the parkland zone, Davidson says "no doubt there are pockets of suitable land (for growing saskatoons) all through the main prairies."

With irrigation and protection from the wind on these lands, he says it is possible to get satisfactory growth in all but the driest areas.

For further information on the saskatoon industry contact Davidson at Beaverlodge 354-2212.

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Contact: Dr. John Davidson
354-2212

January 26, 1987
For immediate release

Wild Rice symposium set for February

The potential of the wild rice industry in Alberta will be examined in Lac La Biche next month at the fourth annual wild rice symposium.

Alberta growers and others interested in becoming involved in the wild rice industry are invited to attend the one-day session to be held Feburary 25 at the Alberta Vocational Centre.

Trial projects have been ongoing since 1982 to establish a wild rice industry in the province. About 1,000 acres of natural shallow lakes, most in the Lac La Biche/Athabasca area, have been seeded to this specialty crop.

Sponsored by the Alberta Wild Rice Growers Association and Alberta Agriculture, the symposium will review the marketing system for wild rice in North America and examine the Saskatchewan wild rice industry, says Harvey Yoder, district agriculturist in Lac La Biche.

Saskatchewan, which introduced wild rice several years ago, has become a leading producer, harvesting as much as a million pounds of rice in one season.

Speakers during the day will compare wild rice grown in commercial paddies to lake-grown wild rice. Conference participants will learn where rice is used, what companies are involved in the industry and get some predictions on the future of the industry and prices.

Erland Stein, a wild rice specialist with the Saskatchewan Indian Agriculture Program (SIAP) from Meadow Lake will discuss production aspects of wild rice.

He will review topics such as selection of lakes, seeding rates, when to seed, harvesting and harvesting techniques.

Another SIAP representative, Doug Horner will review the history of wild rice production in Saskatchewan, noting the programs available in that province to assist producers.

Bill Plunz, manager of the Saskatchewan Wild Rice Council, will update the activities of his council and there will be a report on the progress of the newly formed Canadian Wild Rice Council.

(Cont'd)

Wild rice symposium set for February (cont'd)

Alberta growers produced about 18,000 pounds of rice in 1986, says Yoder. All production was used to either expand acreages or improve existing stands of rice. He says growers achieved good yields from small acreages with production as high as 300 pounds per acre.

The district agriculturist, who has worked with Alberta producers since the beginning, says if the weather had co-operated, production would have been higher. Heavy rain this summer raised the water level of several lakes causing some crops to drown out.

Yoder says many producers have made a comittment to the Alberta industry and there continues to be strong interest shown by people thinking about becoming growers.

The most suitable areas for wild rice production appear to be shallow lakes north of Edmonton, as far north as Fort Chipewyan and along the foothills, south as far as Sundre.

Anyone interested in the symposium is asked to notify the wild rice association or the Alberta Agriculture district office. Pre-registration is encouraged.

For information or to pre-register write the Alberta Wild Rice Growers Association, Box 2007, Lac La Biche, or phone the district office at 623-5218.

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Contact: Harvey Yoder or Dave Burdek
623-5218

January 26, 1987
For immediate release

Use common sense fertilizer economics

Farmers planning to fertilize in the 1987 crop year can improve their decision making skills by studying an Alberta Agriculture fact sheet.

"The publication uses a common sense approach to help interested producers decide how much nitrogen fertilizer to apply," says Craig Edwards, a department specialist in Olds.

Factors considered are expected crop response to nitrogen fertilizer application, expected crop prices, fertilizer cost, availability of operating capital and an assessment of risk.

The information is contained in the factsheet, Fertilizer Economics, (Agdex 822-11).

"The article demonstrates a method of considering many factors to determine the most likely amount of fertilizer to apply to maximize profit, within the limits and conditions considered," says the farm business management branch economist.

Marginal analysis and equal marginal return analysis are demonstrated with a common sense method based on comparing added returns with the added costs of each application.

The comparison enables producers to assess potential gains relative to potential losses and helps them to select a rate of application associated with their ability and attitude to taking chances on the outcome.

"Producers can use the procedure described in the article to improve the probability of increasing the profitability of their production," says the economist. "Understanding the concepts will assist in developing production plans that make economic sense."

The publication is available from Alberta Agriculture district offices; print media branch, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6; or from the farm business management branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0, 556-4240.

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Contact: Craig Edwards
556-4248

January 26, 1987
For immediate release

Head of Airdrie regional laboratory appointed

Dr. Dennis Bolingbroke has been appointed head of the Alberta Agriculture regional veterinary laboratory in Airdrie.

Bolingbroke, who has been with the department since 1982 had served as acting head of the Airdire lab for the past year. He replaces Dr. Nick Nation who has taken another position with the department.

The appointment was announced by Dr. Ralph Christian, director of the department's animal health division in Edmonton.

Bolingbroke was born in Saskatchewan and recieved his early education in Regina. He graduated from the University of Saskatchewan with a bachelor of arts in 1957. Following this he worked as a weather forecaster in Alberta and the Northwest Territories and spent five years farming at Fort Qu'Apelle, Saskatchewan.

Bolingbroke returned to the Unviersity of Saskatchewan in 1968 and obtained a doctor of veterinary medicine degree in 1972. After spending eight years in a mixed veterinary practice in Manitoba, he decided to again further his education and returned to graduate school at Western College of Veterinary Medicine. He obtained a master's degree in veterinary science in 1982.

Since graduating he has been working for the animal health division spending four years as a veterinary diagnostic pathologist in the Lethbridge and Airdire laboratories.

The Airdrie lab is one of three regional laboratories under the regional laboratories branch. The lab primarily works with producers and veterinarians in south-central Alberta.

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Contact: Dr. Dennis Bolingbroke
948-6868

January 26, 1987
For immediate release

Time to register for tree pruning courses

Anyone interested in learning the technique of tree pruning and tree care should register soon for an annual course offered by Alberta Agriculture in Brooks and Edmonton.

The two-day tree pruning course will be offered simultaneously March 3 and March 4 at the Alberta Horticultural Research Center at Brooks and the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticultural Centre, just northeast of Edmonton.

Registration is limited to 30 people at each location and the deadline for registering is March 1.

Registration froms are available from the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre at R.R. 6, Edmonton, T5B 4K3 or the Alberta Horticultural Research Centre, Bag Service 200, Brooks, T0J 0J0.

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Contact: Herman Oosterhuis
973-3351

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AGRI-NEWS

February 2, 1987

CANADIANA
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FEB 16 1987

For immediate release

This Week

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

Feburary 2, 1987
For immediate release

New program looks at the entire beef operation

Before a beef producer can determine where his operation is going he has to first find out where he is at, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

Simply deciding that changes need to be made without knowing where to strike first, might be a frustrating and costly exercise, says Dr. John Basarab, a beef management specialist with the department in Edmonton.

He says farmers and ranchers now participating in the new beef herd management program (BHMP) in Alberta are finding, through their own initiative, where their weaknesses are and where management changes will be most effective.

"Any issue that relates to raising and marketing of beef can be addressed in this beef herd management program," he says. "And the beauty is that we aren't talking about management changes that are going to cost an arm and a leg. Often we're dealing with changes in attitudes, or changes in thinking or changes in routine that can make a big difference throughout the operation."

The department's beef cattle and sheep branch, in cooperation with field staff and Alberta cow-calf producers, is taking a more integrated and broader approach to beef cattle production and management through BHMP, says Basarab.

"The delivery of advice and technical information to beef cattle producers was often done in isolation," he says. "Specialists in animal nutrition, reproduction, health and genetics and in range and pasture management, marketing, engineering, finance and home economics have each transferred new and specialized technology to producers. However, this was often done without a clear understanding of how the new technology fit into the producer's operation.

"Through the BHMP this information is put into perspective as to what it means to an individual producer's operation. It is tailored to suit his objectives and his expectations."

(Cont'd)

New program looks at the entire beef operation (cont'd)

Producers participating in the program need to keep key records on production, marketing and finance. In the initial stages and for new producers, these records may be as basic as counting the calves born each week, the number of females in the breeding pasture, the number of calves dead at birth and the number that died from birth to weaning and the average weights of calves at weaning.

"From this very basic information we can determine any number of problems," says the animal geneticist. "It is that starting point where the producer can see in black and white where problems are and then begin to modify his management to improve production."

As producers begin to see the value of records they may want more details. The program, which eventually will be adapted for home computer use, will be designed to adjust to the producer's needs. The records can be converted to provide the farm manager with indicators that tell him the strengths and weaknesses of his/her cow-calf operation.

"Once the weaknesses have been identified the producer can make pinpoint managment decisions which strengthen the operation," says Basarab. "This means more dollars returned per cow in the herd."

The management programs can take several forms. One of the most successful is the Total Beef Clubs. Livestock specialists and district agriculturists introduce the concept of integrated beef herd management to groups of cow-calf producers in their areas.

The interested producers form a group which meets on a regular basis. At these meetings producers, assisted by district agriculturists and/or livestock specialists, discuss their major production, marketing and financial problems and alternative management strategies to deal with each.

"A very important part of this process is the monitoring of key herd management indicators," says Basarab. "Some of these indicators are calf weaning weights, the number of open cows, length of calving season, calf death loss and cash costs of production. The producers can review these indicators, identify problems and discuss management options with outside expertise."

(Cont'd)

New program looks at the entire beef operation (cont'd)

Other methods of implementing BHMP have been less formal and have been directed toward individual producers. Experience in Idaho and in some areas of Alberta show the most successful beef herd management groups are those that are producer "owned" and controlled.

In the future, the BHMP will be further supported by a comprehensive beef herd management binder and microcomputer software called Total Beef.

This computer program will diagnose problems in the producer's herd improving the accuracy of recommendations made by livestock specialists and district agriculturists. The goal of BHMP is to increase the total herd production efficiency and net profit of individual cow-calf producers.

For more information on the beef herd improvement program contact a district agriculturist or Dr. Basarab, at 427-5332.

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Contact: Dr. John Basarab
427-5332

February 2, 1987
For immediate release

February is meat month in Canada

The producers and promoters of Canada's meat industry will be launching a campaign during February to dispell some of the myths about eating meat.

February is Canadian Meat Month and seminars and other information programs are planned throughout Alberta to tell consumers that moderate amounts of red meat consumption is not only acceptable, but is essential to a well-balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle.

"Todays consumers are more health and fitness conscious than ever before," says Susan Kitchen, of Alberta Agriculture, who is chairman of the Alberta committee of Canadian Meat Month.

"And, over the past 15 years the multi-billion dollar red meat industry has kept pace with our changing lifestyles and eating preferences to produce lean lamb, pork and beef. However, dietary information and misinformation about meat abounds."

Kitchen says the Canadian Meat Month Program "Meat - The Facts" will focus on issues surrounding low fat diets, wholesomeness of meat, Canada's meat inspection system, and trends in meat merchandising.

Information on meat, along with recipe suggestions are available from many of the district home economists in Alberta.

Two special aspects of the meat awareness program will involve seminars in Calgary and Edmonton in February. The program will feature nationally known speakers brought together for the first time in Alberta.

Speaking at both "Meat -The Facts" seminars are Dr. Neil McKie, assistant director of veterinary inspection with Agriculture Canada and Dr. Steve Jones, head of the red meats and beef production section of the Agriculture Canada research centre at Lacombe.

Harvey Rubelac, sales promotion manager of Woodwards Foods - Alberta will address the seminar in Edmonton, while Fidel Stephenson, meat merchandising manager for Canada Safeway will speak in Calgary.

(Cont'd)

February is meat month in Canada (cont'd)

Lynda Corby, a consulting nutritionist from Winnipeg will also speak in both centres about "lower fat diets - consumer reaction and nutritional implications".

For more information on Canadian Meat Month, contact Susan Kitchen in Calgary at 297-8452 or your local district home economist.

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Contact: Susan Kitchen
297-8452

February 2, 1987
For immediate release

Volunteers needed to share farm experience

More volunteers, from across Alberta, are needed to help with a school information program that brings the message of farm life to Alberta's elementary school students.

In a province where agriculture plays a major role in daily lives, it is important that school children, who may not have any farm background, understand what impact agriculture has, says a spokesman for the Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC).

The commission is one of five agencies which are sponsoring the Classroom Agriculture Program (CAP II) for the second consecutive year. The program will be offered during Agriculture Week, March 8 to 14.

The program involves individual volunteers who have some agricultural-related background spending at least one 30-minute session with students explaining their role in agriculture and what it means to the average person.

"We want to explain to students how they are involved in Agriculture," says Pat Inglis, CAP project co-ordinator. "Approximately 330 schools have requested the program and our priority right now is finding volunteers."

The program will be presented to Grades 4, 5, and 6 urban and rural students throughout the province.

This year's program is called Partners. It is designed to demonstrate the interdependency between the producer and consumer and explain to students how they are involved in agriculture.

ACC spokesman Joanne Lemke says volunteers can be farmers or ranchers or their family members, anyone involved with any type of agribusiness, instructors from agricultural schools or anyone involved with an agricultural organization.

(Cont'd)

Volunteers needed to share farm experience (cont'd)

"We're looking for volunteers who have some agricultural-related background," says Lemke. "Their experience is all part of the agricultural industry and is worth sharing."

Also working with the ACC on the project is Agaware - Alberta's agriculture awareness institute, the Women's Institute, Alberta Women in Support of Agriculture, the Beef Education Association and the Beef Information Centre.

Volunteers will be given a training session in their area and matched with a nearby school.

For more information contact Inglis or Lemke at the ACC office in Calgary at 291-4800.

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Contact: Joanne Lemke
291-4800

February 2, 1987
For immediate release

Hog producers encouraged to enter contest

Entries are now being accepted from hog producers interested in the annual competition to produce the best hog carcass.

Entries for the barrow carcass competition will be accepted until February 28.

Sponsored by the 1987 Alberta Pork Congress, the barrow competition is a test to determine who can raise the best barrow carcass within an 11-week period.

Art Lange with Alberta Agriculture's pork industry branch says entries are weighed on test and tagged by provincial technicians during the last two weeks in March. At the time of tagging the live barrows cannot be over 35 kg (77 lb).

The barrows are brought to the congress on June 8, slaughtered, and the carcasses are scored.

The top 10 will be sold by auction at the pork congress banquet June 10.

"This can be rewarding for the contributors since the top 10 sold for an average of $2890 each in 1986, and the number one carcass sold for $4,600," says Lange. "Sale proceeds are returned to the contributor minus a 20 per cent commission."

All hog producers are invited to enter. The entry fee is $25. For more information and entry forms, contact the pork congress office in Red Deer at 340-5307 or the pork industry branch in Edmonton at 427-5319.

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Contact: Art Lange
427-5319

February 2, 1987
Hold for release until February 4, 1987

Alberta dairymen honored

Nearly 80 Alberta dairy farmers will be honored February 4 as they are named recipients of the first Alberta Agriculture Award of Excellence.

The 76 dairy producers will be introduced at an awards breakfast held during the Alberta Dairymen's Association annual convention in Calgary. The convention runs from February 2 to 4.

David Domes, provincial milk quality specialist with the department's dairy division in Wetaskiwin says the award is not based on the largest or newest dairy operation, but measures milk quality and the condition of the farm buildings and facilities in which it is produced.

Dairy production branch staff conducted inspections and monitored milk quality on Alberta dairy farms during the year. Dairy operations were rated according to five criteria.

"Exceptional management, dedication and pride are necessary to meet the criteria for the award," says Ed Bristow, head of the dairy production branch. "Alberta Agriculture is proud to sponsor this new award. We wish to congratulate the producers for their achievement."

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Contact: David Domes
352-1223

(Editor's Note: Attached is a list of the 76 winners of the Award of Excellence.)

Alberta dairymen honored (cont'd)

Following is a list of the recipients of the first Alberta Agriculture Award of Excellence for dairy producers:

Ar-ro Farms, Alhambra; Avison, W.A., Ponoka; Bennett, Ralph, Wainwright; Boelman, Reint B., Pibroch; Boese, Robert A. Linden; Brunken, Edward Wm., Leduc;, Busenius, Harvey, New Sarepta; Bushert, David and Larry, Carstairs; Carmeron, Wm. A., New Sarepta; Clarke, Brant, Vilna; Clear Lake Colony, Claresholm; Crocus Way Farm Ltd., Carstairs.

Damkar, Norman, Ernest, Iris, Calgary; DeJong, Ted, Anne, John, Brian, Brooks; Devolin, Ronald, Didsbury; Dykstra, Albert and Myra, Didsbury; Gamache, Didier, St. Paul; Gisler, Werner, Bonnyville, Grand Coulee Farms Ltd., Rollyview; Green, Gordon, Duchess; Hammer, Gordon, Leduc; Hanson, John, New Sarepta; Heppner, Ernest and Lorenz, Edmonton; Hihn, David and Jerome, Heisler; Hillman, Barry L. Lethbridge, Hofstra, Cornelius A., Leduc; Horneman, Abel and Cecile, Millet; Hunt, Don, Didsbury; Hutterite Brethren Church of O.B., Marwayne.

Irvine Farm Ltd., Vegreville; Iversen, Kristine and Eric, Olds, Jefferies, Gary D., Olds; Kamps Dairy Farms Ltd., Lacombe; Kinnear's Dairy Farm Ltd. High River; Krogh, Peder & Murray, Maida, Didsbury; Laczo, Frank, Breton; Lakeside Colony, Cranford; Lang, Colin, Viking; Lauber, William, Tofield; Lausen Dairies; Innisfail; Lethbridge Research Station, Lethbridge.

Maldaner, Brian, Tilley; Mandel, F.W., New Sarepta; Marlawn Farms, Blackfalds; Matthiessen, Brian and Elaine, Heisler; McIntosh, Donald and Mary, Okotoks; Metke, Irvin, Sunnybrook; Nessler, Richard, Rollyview; Neuman, Gerhard, Thorsby; New York Colony, Lethbridge; Ohlmann, Len, Leduc; Osness, David Talbert, Camrose; Parkland Colony, Parkland; Pelchat Magella, St. Paul.

Ringle, Robert, Debolt; Robbins, Leo, Pincher Cr., Robdon Farms Ltd., Gibbons; Robertson, Bruce Didsbury; Rommens, A.G., Duchess; Ronald, Neale, Ponoka; Rottmerhusen, Detlef, Bluffton; Saskatoon Valley Farm Ltd., Warburg; Shepert, Don, St. Paul; Silver Creek Dairy, New Norway; Spiers, Arnold and Gordon, Olds; Stanesby, Wm. and Alexander, Sherwood Park; Stashko, David, Vegreville; Staub, Christian, Millet.

Trautman, S.F. and Odean, New Norway; Van Peteghen, Lionel and Emily, Vermilion, Vennemann, Ben A., Olds; Visscher, H. S. and B., Legal; Volkman, Clarence and Kevin, New Sarepta; Wingrove, Joseph and Mark, Brooks; Wylie, Len, Calgary and Wyntjes and Sons Farms Ltd, Red Deer.

February 2, 1987
For immediate release

1986 was a year of weather contrast

Although January's weather was similar to that of January 1986 it is no indication that rest of this year will follow suit, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

Peter Dzikowski, weather resource specialist with the department in Edmonton says 1986 indicates, the weather can take some drastic turns during the year with little or no warning.

The conservation and development branch specialist says while there was some good weather during the year, from a farmer or rancher's point of view it is hoped the combination of floods, blizzards and drought during the 1986 growing season are not repeated.

"Like this year, January 1986 was much warmer than normal, setting records as the warmest January in several localities," he says in a review of the 1986 weather year. "It was also drier than normal, setting low precipitation records."

In February there was a return to cold weather, however conditions fluctuated greatly. Precipitation was generally lower than normal, but a blizzard mid-month brought heavy snow accumulations to the southwestern foothills. A rapid melt resulted in flash flooding, which killed 150 cattle in high water west of Lethbridge.

Temperatures climbed in March to 2 - 8 degrees C above normal. Most of the province experienced a wetter than normal month except for the Calgary area.

April saw near normal temperatures and dry conditions, especially south of Edmonton where less than 50 per cent of the normal monthly precipitation was received.

"May was a month of contrasts," says Dzikowski. "A major blizzard mid-month crippled the Red Deer, Three Hills, Calgary and Strathmore areas, causing major damage to transmission lines. By the end of the month, Alberta was experiencing a heat wave with temperatures into the 30's. The southern third of Alberta had above average precipitation, while the Peace River block was dry."

(Cont'd)

1986 was a year of weather contrast (cont'd)

June was warmer than average with highly variable precipitation. There were many thunderstorms and several tornadoes were reported.

July was cooler and much wetter than normal. Heavy rains and snow-melt in the west central foothills brought rivers to the highest flood stage in many years. Flood damage was reported along the Red Deer, North Saskatchewan, Paddle, Pembina and Athabasca Rivers. Southwestern districts remained dry.

Slightly above normal temperatures in August provided a chance for things to dry out. However, rains returned in September. The monthly precipitation was about three times the long term normal. The south-eastern corner of Alberta set records for not only the wettest September, but the wettest month on record. The month was cooler than normal with widespread frost during the first week.

Conditions improved again in October allowing harvesting until snow came at month's end. Temperatures dropped in November about 2 degrees or more below normal, but December brought warmer temperatures a month late. December was 5 - 10 degrees C warmer than average, as well as being much drier than normal.

For more information contact Peter Dzikowski, in Edmonton at 422-4385.

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Contact: Peter Dzikowski
422-4385

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February 9, 1987

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For immediate release

This Week

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

February 9, 1987
For immediate release

Agreement can reduce landlord risk

Although land owners can't buy insurance to guard against non-payment of farmland rent, they can make a written agreement with the renter that will help protect their interests.

Garth Nickorick, a farm management economist with Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch in Olds says landlords can be particularly vulnerable when payment in the rental agreement is tied to the success of the crop.

Nickorick says under these terms if there is a crop failure the landlord could be left empty handed if his risk isn't covered in the rental agreement.

"Insurance and risk go hand in hand," says Nickorick. "Landlords looking to reduce the risk of rent not being paid are not likely to collect rent from the Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation. In Alberta, all risk crop insurance can only be purchased by actual farm operators.

"This means that landlords will not participate in a crop insurance pay out in the case of a crop failure, even though the lease agreement is based on a shared risk concept."

However, there is a way landlords and renters can make an arrangement to suit both, says the specialist. The lease may contain a clause which spells out how the crop insurance cheque will be split between the landlord and the renter. For example, they may agree to split the cost of the premium and share in the benefits according to the original cropshare split.

"Whether this is the decision the parties wish to get into will depend on the individuals involved. Insurance premiums are dependent on the risk area, crop, coverage level and claim history."

A landlord should realize that each renter farming his land may be in different standing with the insurance corporation. The landlord should weigh the insurance decision based on each individual's record with the insurance corporation.

(Cont'd)

Agreement can reduce landlord risk (cont'd)

In insurance discussions with renters, landlords should also be aware coverage for damage is related to the entire acreage of a particular crop seeded by the renter.

"Suppose a renter had four quarters of canola three of which he owned and rented one," says Nickorick. "Suppose the rented crop was wiped out but the other three were bumper yields. The crop insurance assessment would look at all the canola, and it may well be that the overall yield would not trigger a payout. The landlord on the cropshare basis would receive nothing even though insurance was purchased and the crop lost."

Straight hail insurance is available from the crop insurance corporation and can be purchased by landlords as well as operators as long as the total dollar value of the insurance does not exceed $125 an acre. This is a separate program that is not associated with the all risk crop insurance program.

Questions regarding crop insurance should be addressed to the Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance Corporation, 5718 - 56 Ave., Lacombe, Alberta, (or to one of the corporation's regional offices), any Alberta Agriculture district office, or the farm business management branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0.

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Contact: Garth Nickorick
(403) 556-4247

February 9, 1987
For immediate release

Conference looks at market future

Farmers facing crop and livestock decisions in 1987 will find that a provincial conference in Edmonton in March should help eliminate some of the guess work over which production path to follow.

Accent 87 - Taking Stock, is a conference aimed at helping producers and others involved in agriculture to put market conditions in perspective, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture in Edmonton.

Marilyn Johnson, a market economist with the market analysis branch says speakers at the two-day conference will provide both short and long term outlooks for producers on grain, oilseed and livestock markets.

"The conference is planned at this time of year to provide producers with market information that may help them in planning their crop and livestock production," says Johnson. "When market conditions are a challenge, an understanding of what is going on and an insight into what can be expected is essential."

This is the eighth annual agricultural outlook conference sponsored by the department. This year it will be bring together nationally and internationally known industry specialists to share their expertise with producers.

Beginning March 10 at the Hotel Convention Inn, conference speakers will include Dr. Brian Oleson, of the Canadian Wheat Board, speaking on the international wheat situation; Mike Hinebaugh of Hinebaugh Associates of Wisconsin speaking on international feedgrains; Dr. Gary Storey of the Unviersity of Saskatchewan speaking on quota grain outlook and Russ Crawford of Cargill Limited, speaking on the local grain market outlook.

Dr. Barry Flinchbaugh of Kansas State University will speak at the evening banquet on the U.S. farm policy and politicians.

(Cont'd)

Conference looks at market future (cont'd)

March 11, Dr. Gene Futrell, of Iowa State University will give the U.S. pork and hog outlook, followed by Professor T.K. Warley of the University of Guelph speaking on international trade policy perspectives. Peter Lloyd, director of marketing for EXCAN of Winnipeg will talk about canola and flaxseeds.

The early afternoon will be devoted to livestock markets with Bruce Ginn, of a Kansas City consulting firm, speaking on the U.S. beef and cattle outlook, and Garnet Altwasser of Lakeside Feeders in Brooks talking about the Alberta beef perspective.

The conference closes with Peter Dyck, of Brett-Young Seeds of Winnipeg discussing alternative crops and Lloyd Quantz, president of AgriTrends Research Inc. of Calgary discussing equity, land values and farm financial implications.

Anyone planning to attend the conference is urged to register by February 27. Registration fee for full conference events is $60 which includes the banquet, luncheon and the proceedings - a written copy of all presentations made by the speakers.

The fee for just the conference and proceedings is $30 and for a copy of the proceedings only the cost is $15.

For further information contact the department's market analysis branch, J.G. O'Donoghue Building, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6 or phone 427-5387.

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Contact: Marilyn Johnson
427-4002

February 9, 1987
For immediate release

New issues face Alberta dairymen

Along with the normal demands of producing high quality milk, Alberta farmers will, in the future, also have to deal with the moral and ethical issues advancing on the dairy industry.

Methods used in raising dairy cattle along with new technology to boost milk production, give rise to controversial subjects such as animal welfare and the moral implications of biotechnology.

These sometimes thorny issues will be among items discussed in Banff, March 10 to 13, at the three-day Alberta Dairy Seminar.

How to develop and maintain a dairy herd is the main focus of the conference that will bring together more than a dozen speakers including farmers, researchers and policy makers.

"The objective of the seminar is to enable producers, agribusiness, extension specialists and others to stay abreast of the latest developments in dairy production and technology," says Brian Rhiness, provincial dairy production specialists with Alberta Agriculture's dairy branch in Wetaskiwin.

The conference has three sub-themes, with speakers organized to address each of these over the three days.

"Herd Development: Cow Longevity Versus Genetic Improvement" is the topic for March 11. "Herd care: Health and Welfare" will be discussed March 12 and "Free Trade and the Dairy Industry" is on the agenda for March 13.

Speakers during the seminar will include Jack Albright, a professor of animal management and behavior at Purdue University in Indiana. His seminar topics will include keeping the cow in the herd longer and animal welfare and/or animal rights.

Keith Salmon, a professor of animal biotechnolgy at the University of Alberta in Edmonton will discuss biotechnology and its moral and economic issues.

(Cont'd)

New issues face Alberta dairymen (cont'd)

Denis Cloutier, who operates a 700-head dairy operation near McLennan and Harry Pederson, a Millet-area dairy farmer, who has built a reputation for raising good quality heifers, will talk about developing a profitable dairy herd.

Other speakers on herd development will include Doug Blair, president of Western Breeders, an artificial insemination centre at Balzac, Dr. Dave Chalack a Calgary veterinarian, Morris Freeman, general manager of CEMEX Ltd. of Guelph.

Speaking on health issues will be Stephen Acres, a research scientist and a director fo Veterinary Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO) in Saskatoon, Paul Greenough, a professor at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon, Gerald Ollis, with the health management branch of Alberta Agriculture, Jack Rodenburg a dairy cattle specialist with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Fred Wolfe of the food science department at the University of Alberta.

Discussing the impact of free trade will be Kempton Matte, with the National Dairy Council in Ottawa, Dr. Joe Rosario, senior trade policy advisor for Alberta Agriculture and Jim Youde, president of Northwest Economic Associates in Vancouver Washington.

Any producers or farm couples interested in attending the seminar should register early to ensure accomodation and to take advantage of early registration discounts.

For further information contact Val Smyth at the University of Alberta at 432-3116.

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Contact: Brian Rhiness
352-1223

February 9, 1987
For immediate release

What are the alternatives for Alberta farmers?

If the future of the grain industry isn't too bright are there other ways for Alberta farmers to make money?

While there are no get-rich-quick formulas, a specialist from the University of Saskatoon will be in Innisfail in early March to discuss that very subject at a conference called "Alternatives 1990".

Dr. Red Williams, a University of Saskatoon animal science professor, will present the keynote address at the March 10 conference, held in conjunction with Agriculture Week in Alberta.

"With cereal grain prices disasterously low and no real improvement in sight, many farm managers feel that an alternative enterprise may be a good strategy," says Ted Darling, Alberta Agriculture district agriculturist in Innisfail. "Alternatives 1990 will introduce several feasible enterprise opportunities for farmers."

The conference is sponsored by the Innisfail and District Agricultural Society and the department's district office in Innisfail.

Williams will set the stage during the morning session, with a futuristic look at the agriculture industry. In the afternoon a select-a-session format will cover four main topics: cropping options, cattle country plus, profitable sidelines and innovative financing.

Each session will be repeated once to enable participants to attend two of the four presentations. The emphasis will be on farmers talking to farmers about ideas which work and are being used, says Darling.

Agriculture Week activities are also planned March 11 with an "Agriculture Night - Live". The evening will feature variety entertainment and an Alberta food products banquet.

(Cont'd)

What are the alternatives for Alberta farmers? (cont'd)

"Although the future of our grain industry is uncertain, there are positive strategies that each farm management team can consider," says Darling. "We hope this conference will be an introduction to some of them."

For further information or to pre-register, contact the Innisfail district office at 227-6565.

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Contact: Ted Darling, Corey Loessin
or Karen Goad
227-6565

Feburary 9, 1987
For immediate release

Hog producer must be good manager

With a greater need for more efficiency in production there is little chance of survival for a poor manager in the pork industry says a British veterinary recently speaking in Alberta.

Dr. Richard Penny says a poor manager can run the best hog operation in the world into the ground while a good manager can probably make something of the worst set up imaginable.

"The hog industry is always very concerned about diseases, which is a very important aspect," he says. "But the crux of the issue is good management. If you have someone who is a poor manager it doesn't matter how good your livestock is or how good the facilities are; he's going to have trouble."

Penny was in Edmonton to speak to agriculture students at the University of Alberta and in Banff to address Alberta hog producers at the Alberta Pork Seminar.

In private practice as a veterinary for several years, he also worked as a clinical pathologist at the University of Bristol and served in recent years as a professor of clincial veterinary medicine at the Royal Veterinary College. He is semi-retired.

During his speaking engagements in Alberta he talked about disease problems in modern pig production.

"Treating diseases isn't just knowing about bacteria and viruses. You also have to understand the relationship and impact of housing, the environment in which you are raising pigs, energy needs and energy consumption. These factors all have an influence on the health of your animals."

Penny says a good manager and his staff have to be alert and able to recognize a problem early before it turns into a disaster.

(Cont'd)

Hog producer must be good manager (cont'd)

He says there are more younger and better educated hog managers today trying to be increasingly efficient.

"There is a phrase that says a pig manager is at the top of the pile intellectually and at the bottom of the pile socially. A good manager almost has to be a scientist; keeping up with technology and staying on top of the job."

The hog industry in the United Kingdom is at one of its lowest points price-wise while the number of sows being raised is at an all time high. There are about 30,000 hog operations in the United Kingdom down from about 100,000 in 1960. Collectively these farms raise about 840,000 sows.

Penny says the average operation keeps about 50 sows although there are several hog farms with up to 1,500 sows. Generally the packing plants prefer white pigs and the animals are shipped to achieve a 70 to 75 kilogram carcass weight.

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Contact: Frank Aherne
University of Alberta
432-2118

February 9, 1987
For immediate release

Animal welfare not harmed by efficiency

Intensive management of livestock does not translate into cruelty to animals say two hog specialists from the United Kingdom.

They say the increased emphasis on production efficiency - the need to produce more for less - should not act as a red flag for those concerned about animal welfare.

Dr. Richard Penny of England and Seaton Baxter of Scotland were recently in Alberta to meet with producers and university agriculture students to talk about hog production.

Penny is a professor of clinical veterinary medicine at the Royal Veterinary College while Seaton is a specialist in designing buildings and handling facilities for the hog industry.

"Intensification of the livestock industry causes changes," says Penny. "Some of those changes are for the good and some are not. Hog farmers like many other farmers have had to become more efficient. This efficiency tends to make him chase after various economies. This exposes the farmer to the criticism of welfare (animal welfare supporters).

"I am not a deeply religious man but I believe animals were put on earth for our use. And I am also one of the first to say that I will not tolerate any type of animal abuse.

"I feel that raising livestock, even intensive livestock operations such as a pig farm, is not abuse of the animals. Certainly animals must learn to adapt and change, but human beings are forced to change all the time and I don't think we consider that abuse."

Penny says hog producers in England operate under an animal welfare code of conduct which is closely followed. He says the welfarists do present a threat to agriculture because their efforts concern the "raw materials" of the producer.

(Cont'd)

Animal welfare not harmed by efficiency (cont'd)

"They can be a hazard to farmers because sometimes their arguments are not thought out very well," says Penny. "The issue is sometimes emotional and it is hard to convince them with scientific arguments. I believe in England a balance between producers and welfarist is being struck."

The specialist says it is important for the general public to be educated in the role and methods of agriculture.

He says in the United Kingdom only 2.8 per cent of the population is involved in agriculture.

"Most people just don't know how farms are run," says Penny. "I believe we need to educate the children in the schools. We need to acutally get them out of the classroom and onto farms so they can see the farm situation."

Seaton Baxter says his work in building design generally fits in well with the needs of the animal welfare groups, although reduction of space requirements for pigs can be contentious.

His theory is that hog barns should be designed to provide a quality space for pigs rather than quantity. From a producers point of view a contented pig will perform better in weight gain.

"Today's economics force producers to take measures such as reducing labor and either cut down on the amount of space used or put more pigs in the space available."

He says this approach is not always compatible with welfare views.

Seaton says farmers must recognize that changes within the industry will be necessary.

"I think it is important that farmers not resist changes that come about because that can be counter-productive. But I think it is important that they try and control the rate of change."

The design specialist says the concerns of animal welfare groups are a good sign. He says it indicates an affluent society that can afford to be concerned with the care of animals.

(Cont'd)

Animal welfare not harmed by efficiency (cont'd)

He says while the United Kingdom has a code of ethics governing animal care, other countries have much more strict regulations.

In Switzerland all machinery or equipment manufactured for handling livestock must meet the standards set by animal welfare interest. This approval is given at the factory level. Individual farmers are allowed to modify the equipment for use at home.

In Sweden however, he says, a farmer cannot build or modify any livestock handling equipment without it meeting the approval of animal welfare inspectors.

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Contact: Frank Aherne
University of Alberta
432-2118

February 9, 1987
For immediate release

In search of a better hog barn

A farmer can spend all kinds of money building or remodelling a hog barn, but how does the pig feel about that?

Is this little weaner bungalow really the dream home for the porker or is it geared more to what the farmer thinks the pig should be raised in?

Thinking like a pig isn't an easy task says a housing design specialist from Scotland, but providing a hog with quality living space not only makes the animal more content but will probably increase production.

Seaton Baxter, of Aberdeen, Scotland, has specialized in designing housing facilities for hogs for the past 20 years. He says designing pig handling facilities so they consider a pig's natural tendencies can often save money and lead to a more content and healthier pig. That should translate into an improved rate of weight gain.

Baxter was in Alberta to speak to agricultural students at the University of Alberta in Edmonton and to address pork producers at the recent Alberta Pork Seminar in Banff.

"Who said a hog needs six square feet of space?" he says. "If you put 10 pigs in a rectangular pen that covers 60 square feet does that mean each pig is going to stay within its six square feet? It means that each hog has 60 square feet of space that it shares with nine other pigs."

A pig really has no concept of space, says Baxter, although it does demonstrate certain needs, because of its nature and size. He says a farmer can run the risk of overcrowding pigs if he puts too many in one pen, but his concern is more about quality of space rather than quantity.

"I think if we pay more attention to providing quality space for pigs we can probably cut down on the amount of space we provide, although there is a limit."

(Cont'd)

In search of a better hog barn (cont'd)

Baxter says pigs require "places" as opposed to space. They need a place to feed, they need a place to sleep, they need watering places, escape places, hiding places, grooming places and waste places.

The specialist says by providing "places", space requirement is less critical.

"Some pigs are more naturally aggressive. Rather than thinking about providing more space so the timid hogs can get away from the aggressive hogs, if the pen allows for hiding or escape places then the stress on pigs is reduced."

Baxter says a maze type layout in a pen is one concept that provides pigs with places to go, without increasing space. He says management tricks such as using straw for bedding provides a pig with a hiding place which may contribute to the animal's sense of well being.

He says more research and study is needed to draw firm conclusions.

"There is not enough research information yet which categorically says that a more content pig is going to gain more weight. But the indications are that this is the situation. And there is no proof that says that the assumption is wrong."

Baxter says in other aspects of the hog handling facilities engineers have not always considered the needs or the habits of the animal.

In spite of all the design work that has gone into farrowing crates, he says newborn pigs are still being crushed when the sow lays down. He says width-wise the crates may be correctly built but many are too short to allow the sow to lay down naturally.

Because the sow doesn't have the length of space in the crate to gradually lower herself, she flops down, often trapping a piglet.

On another point, Baxter says heat lamps are often placed at the edge of the farrowing crate to help young pigs keep warm. Because the lamps are round and the heat radiates in a circle, the young pigs crowd under the lamp in a circular pile. Often the edge of this circle extends into the farrowing crate where the sow can accidentally trample or lay on the pigs.

(Cont'd)

In search of a better hog barn (cont'd)

"Farrowing crates are long and narrow and yet we put a round heat lamp beside them. It would be better to design a heat lamp that is long and narrow to run along the side of the crate and keep young pigs out of harms way."

Baxter says hog producers don't have to launch a major renovation project and buy all new equipment to accommodate the needs of their pigs. He says if they just spend time observing their animals and watching their behavior they can often make modifications in space and equipment to better suit their livestock.

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Contact: Frank Aherne
University of Alberta
432-2218

February 9, 1987
For immediate release

Environment is key to efficient hog production

Something as simple as putting a thermometer in the hog barn could go a long way in helping to improve management and profitability for Alberta pork producers.

Keeping track of temperature highs and lows could be the start of tracking down problems that influence such things as animal health, heating costs, feed rations and the rate of weight gain among hogs, says a researcher from the United Kingdom.

Bill Close, a specialist in the environment and energy needs of pigs, says it is a complex issue when trying to correlate the affects of the hog barn environment to the animal's energy needs.

"There are many, many factors that come into play and different management options a farmer has to weigh in deciding what needs to be done in correcting any particular problem," he says. "But there are some basic observations that can be made that can go along way in providing the solution to problems.

"Putting a thermometer in the barn to measure high and low temperatures is a good start. If you don't know what the temperature is doing throughout the day how can you assess the situation?"

Close also says another good measure is for the producer to use himself as an indicator. He says if the hog barn feels comfortable to the farmer it is probably comfortable for the pigs. If the farmer feels a draft or a cold area, he can assume that the pigs will feel that too.

The environment and energy specialist works for the Institute of Grassland and Animal Products Research at Shinfield, near Reading England.

He was in Alberta to speak to agriculture students at the University of Alberta and to address hog producers at the recent Alberta Pork Seminar in Banff.

(Cont'd)

Environment is key to hog production (cont'd)

Close says by understanding the relationship between environment and energy needs it allows the producer to develop feed and management strategies.

Factors such as the size of the animal, sex, breed, type of flooring in the barn, outside temperature and windspeed all play a role.

"If the environment in the barn isn't right or changes then the feed conversion for the animal may be off and so will profitability.

"As an example if the barn is a little cold the producer has to decide whether it is more economical to improve the heating system or increase the amount or type of rations being fed."

Close says it is important for hog producers to be aware of what environment is and what impact it can have on the animals. He says they should be close observers of the animal's behavior, watching for changes in its attitude and performance.

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Contact: Frank Aherne
University of Alberta
432-2118

February 9, 1987
For immediate release

Rates for livestock services available

The latest figures are in on how much it costs for the various custom livestock services required by Alberta farmers and ranchers.

The recently completed survey of services for cattlemen includes figures on trucking, fencing, corral cleaning and feed processing costs, says Garth Nickorick of Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch at Olds.

Trucking charges for large liners on hauls under 50 miles were $150 to $200 per load. Longer haul rates were quoted at $2.40 to $2.75 per loaded mile.

Construction of three and four strand barbed wire fences, excluding materials, ranged from $500 to $1,600 per mile reflecting the varied type of land fenced. Most commonly the rates were in the $900 to $1,300 per mile range. Removal of old fences was $350 to $450 per mile.

Corral cleaning services, which included one or more loaders, three spreaders and machine operators, were surveyed at between $150 to $175 per hour. Outfits with one loader, two spreaders and operators were in the $110 to $130 per hour range. This converts to $45 per hour per machine.

Feed processing including grinding and dry rolling were most commonly in the $12 to $14 per tonne with lows of $10 and highs of $15 per tonne. Steam rolling quotes ranged from $16 to $25 per tonne with the most common charge around $20 per tonne.

For further details or copies of this survey, contact the farm business management branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0.

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Contact: Garth Nickorick
(403) 556-4247

February 9, 1987
For immediate release

Custom cattle feeding rates surveyed

On average it costs about 41 cents to put a pound of weight gain on feedlot cattle according to a provincial survey of custom feedlot operators.

The survey conducted by Maureen Whitlock of Alberta Agriculture's statistics branch in Edmonton and Garth Nickorick, of the farm business management branch in Olds, indicates the range for cost-of-gain figures was 34 cents to 50 cents per pound gained, with the most common costs between 38 cents to 45 cents per pound. The January survey does not include interest charges.

Yardage rates ranged from 10 cents to 18 cents per day, with the most most common charges being 12 cents to 15 cents per day.

Death loss on calves averaged one per cent, while the figure on yearlings was 0.5 per cent.

Provincially the cost of silage ranged from $22 to $44 per tonne, with the most common costs in the $28 to $33 per tonne range.

The employee-to-animal ratio was 1:1000 in the south and south central regions. The ratio in the north and north central ranged 1:200 to 1:500.

Limited survey results on overwintering cows indicates charges of 85 cents to $1.15 per day.

For more information or copies of this survey, contact the farm business management branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0.

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Contact: Garth Nickorick
(403) 556-4247

February 9, 1987
For immediate release

A stitch in time can save a bundle

During his years in the navy, Rudy Klein would regularly return to the family farm to help with the harvest and regularly he would spend his harvest holiday repairing a broken-down combine.

As a navy pilot and maintenance officer, Klein had learned the value of good maintenance because "there's no place to pull over at 70,000 feet".

So, when he returned to farming full time, he decided to apply, to his farm equipment, the planned preventive maintenance program he had used on jets.

This Fults, Illinois farmer/businessman has worked out a step-by-step approach to machinery maintenance that helps cut repair costs and predict breakdowns before they occur.

Klein will be explaining his maintenance program to Alberta farm couples in Banff this spring as one of the guest speakers at the Alberta Agriculture's Managing Agricultural Technology for Profit conference.

He will be among a series of national and international speakers bringing practical farm management ideas and advice on financing, marketing and production planning to the March 29 to April 1 conference at the Banff Centre.

Klein's maintenance system involves careful inspection of all equipment; and the use of daily, weekly and seasonal checklists; and a permanent maintenance chart.

Machines are broken down into categories and subcategories and then into individual parts and pieces. For example, a tractor is categorized into engine, steering, hydraulics, drive train, electronics, instruments, and control and cab. The subcategories of an engine would include: cooling, fuel, air, ignition, engine oil and exhaust.

Once a year, or more in some cases, parts and pieces are examined. The use of diagnostic tools like oil analysis and a mechanic's stethoscope are suggested.

(Cont'd)

February 9, 1987
For immediate release

Grain price forecast gloomy

Grain farmers assuming things couldn't get any worse should brace themselves for what is expected to be another bad year of low prices.

A specialist with Alberta Agriculture in Edmonton says with the current world grain surplus and considering economic and political factors, wheat prices could drop another 10 to 15 per cent this year and barley prices could be 10 to 20 per cent below 1986 levels.

"I wish the prediction could be more optomistic," says Dwayne Couldwell, a grain market analyst. "But as far as we can see it would take a dramatic turn of events to change things.

"Regardless of other influences, 1986 was the fifth consecutive year of record world wheat production. Very simply, the world wheat surplus is increasing each year."

Couldwell says according to the predictions of Iowa State University the grain market is expected to bottom out in the next two years. By 1989 major grain prices will begin a gradual climb up.

It is expected to take nearly a decade for wheat to get back to its 1985 price level. Corn and feed grains should be back to 1985 levels within eight years and soybeans back to 1985 price levels within six years of the turn around.

Couldwell says there are no get-rich-quick solutions for grain and oilseed producers. He says because the oilseed market is holding up better than grains, farmers should plant as many acres in oilseeds as possible.

"Oilseeds are doing somewhat better, but the price weakness that is affecting grains is also affecting them. Farmers can also consider growing forages and specialty crops, but the contracts with the processing plants are hard to get. There just aren't any easy answers."

(Cont'd)

Grain price forecast gloomy (cont'd)

The world produced 522 million tonnes of wheat in 1986, up from the 499 million tonnes produced in 1985. That's an increase of 4.8 per cent.

The world demand is about 505 million tonnes a year. The 1986 harvest increased the carry over of world wheat supplies - the amount of wheat in storage over and above consumption - to 155 million tonnes.

The analyst says more wheat could be sold if developing countries had more money.

"The problem isn't necessarily that the world over produces as much as it is there are many countries that can't afford the price of the grain that is produced," he says. "There are some suggestions that more grain should be given to these countries, but it is feared this would upset that country's internal economy and cause problems for their own agricultural industry.

"It is believed it is a greater benefit to direct any assistance toward improving the country's infrastructure to help them improve their own economy and their purchasing power."

Couldwell says a further price decline of grains will also be affected by political decisions in the United States. The trade war between the U.S. and the European Economic Community will force grain prices down.

Second he says although there is no direct link, the price of grain over the last five years has followed the changes in the U.S. loan rate on wheat and coarse grains.

"The loan rate is expected to drop by five per cent in each of the next two years," he says. "There is a strong chance that grain prices will follow the same pattern."

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Contact: Dwayne Couldwell
427-5386

February 9, 1987
For immediate release

January weather offered mixed blessings

Average January temperatures at near record high values, were a mixed blessing to Alberta farmers, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

Peter Dzikowski, agricultural weather resource specialist with the department in Edmonton, says the mild temperatures and below normal precipitation have left fields in southern Alberta without snow cover.

This has led to wind erosion problems in fields without a protective crop residue cover. There is also concern that the mild weather has led to reduced winter hardiness in winter wheat.

Average temperatures in January ranged from -0.2 C at Lethbridge, 10.1 C above the long term normal, to -8.6 C at Peace River, 11.8 C above normal.

Precipitation for January varied from a low 1.3 mm at Calgary, only 8 per cent of normal, to a high of 26.7 mm at High Level, 30 per cent above normal for the month. However, Peace River, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat each reported only 6 to 8 mm of precipitation, about 30 per cent of normal.

"Although the mild sunny weather of January was enjoyable, it has caused concerns for farmers watching their soil blow away and for those wondering whether their winter wheat crop will survive if temperatures suddenly drop," says Dzikowski. "As unusual as it may seem, many are probably hoping for a good snowstorm to cover the soil and provide moisture for spring planting."

For more information, contact Dzikowski in Edmonton at 422-4385.

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Contact: Peter Dzikowski
422-4385

AGRI-NEWS

February 16, 1987

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For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

February 16, 1987
For immediate release

U.S. offers plenty of potential for Alberta products

While the export of Alberta's agricultural products to the United States has increased nearly 300 per cent in recent years there is still plenty of room to capture a bigger share of the market, says a trade specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

David Rous, trade director Canada/United States, says the expansion of Canada's and Alberta's export is only an incentive to sell even more products to our southern neighbor.

Alberta's export of agricultural products amounted to about $346 million in 1985, while Canadian agricultural exports (including Alberta's portion) to the U.S. were valued at about $3 billion.

"Our exports to the U.S. are really only a drop in the bucket," says Rous. "Currently the U.S. is importing about $20 billion (U.S.) annually in agricultural products. It is a realistic challenge for us to continue to increase exports at percentage levels similar to the past few years."

Rous says although the final statistics for last year have not been tabulated, it appears that beef exports in 1986 held their own and pork exports are again expected to show a "sizeable" increase over 1985.

The United States is Canada's and Alberta's largest export market. About 30 per cent of Canada's agricultural exports are moved across the border.

Rous says Canada's $3 billion in sales represented a 114 per cent increase over 1979 export sales. And if Canadian percentages sound good, Alberta's record is even more dramatic.

Alberta's $346 million worth of agricultural products sold to the United States in 1985, represented a 289 per cent increase over 1979 sales of $89 million.

Canadian meat, fresh, chilled or frozen exports to the U.S. in 1985 were valued at $602 million compared to $190 million in 1979.

(Cont'd)

U.S. offers plenty of potential for Alberta products (cont'd)

"Alberta meat exports were $12 million in 1979 and a whopping $110 million in 1985 - an increase of 817 per cent," says Rous. "Meat is Alberta's largest export category to the U.S., surpassing live animals."

Alberta beef exports to the U.S. in 1980 were worth $10 million. In 1985 they were valued at $60 million, a 500 per cent increase. Exports of Alberta pork increased from $3 million in 1980 to $50 million in 1985, a sixteenfold increase.

"The majority of Alberta beef exports to the U.S.A. continue to be manufacturing type beef, such as cow beef, for use in the hamburger trade," says the trade director. "However, exports of high quality (H.Q.) beef are gradually increasing as Alberta exporters become more familiar with the needs of U.S. west coast clients."

The bulk of Alberta pork exports is in the form of fresh/frozen pork cuts, destined for the Pacific Northwest and California markets.

Other agricultural commodities and products which have had success in the U.S. market in 1985 were canola oil and meal, honey, whiskey, cattle hides and peat moss.

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Contact: David Rous
427-4241

February 16, 1987
For immediate release

Meat and dairy specialists appointed

Alberta's meat and dairy industry will have a new team of provincial specialists working on their behalf following the appointment of two people to positions in Calgary and Edmonton.

Susan Kitchen, of Calgary who has worked with the marketing sector of Alberta Agriculture since 1975 has been appointed manager of the meat and dairy section of the department's agri-food development branch.

Working with Kitchen will be Bob Tchir, who has been appointed marketing officer responsible for meat and dairy development. Tchir will be based in Edmonton.

The appointments were recently announced by Don Macyk, head of the agri-food development branch in Edmonton.

The specialists will be responsible for assisting in developing and co-ordinating long range marketing strategies of Alberta's meat and dairy industries.

Their work will involve commodities such as beef, pork, lamb, buffalo, dairy, veal, goat meat, horse meat, ducks, pheasants, aquaculture, eggs, poultry, rabbits and hides.

They will provide information regarding the viability of new meat and dairy products and related processing ventures and seek ways to improve marketability and closely monitor economic and market activity as it affects this sector of the agricultural economy.

"We will work closely with the key management of over 50 major firms," says Kitchen. "We must be cognizant of their concerns and encourage the development of new opportunities.

"The industry is dynamic - ever changing to meet the demands of the world marketplace. It will be important to position new products and necessary market efforts to be on the threshold of industry growth."

Kitchen and Tchir respectively assume the rolls previously held by Dave Rous and Peggy Marce who have taken on other duties within the marketing sector of the department.

(Cont'd)

Meat and dairy specialists appointed (cont'd)

Prior to this appointment, Kitchen was associate marketing director - Alberta, responsible for establishing the market development program in the province. Tchir was formerly the department's associate trade director for eastern North America, involved with the sale and promotion of beef to Quebec and Ontario - two major markets for Alberta beef.

"Susan and Bob will bring to the job a broad knowledge of the intricacies of the marketplace and a strong awareness of the steps in developing new products and business," says Macyk in making the job announcements.

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Contact: Don Macyk
427-7366
Susan Kitchen
297-8452

February 16, 1987
For immediate release

Annual pasture provides good returns

It probably shouldn't be considered a replacement for permanent pasture, but grazing cattle on cereal grains can be a wise move for farmers and ranchers needing forage for their livestock.

In general it is a more expensive pasture to develop, but considering the options of either getting rid of some cattle because of a lack of grass or delaying improvements to permanent pasture, planting annuals is a viable alternative says an Alberta Agriculture district agriculturist.

Following an on-farm demonstration in the Lac La Biche area, northeast of Edmonton last year, Harvey Yoder says results of the trial show that cattle made good gains during a four and a half month grazing season on wheat, oats and rye pasture.

"There has been a considerable amount of research using annuals for hay or silage purposes, but very little research has been done on grazing annuals using animals," he says. "Most of the work on annuals for pasture production has been done using clippings as a method of evaluation."

To test the theory, Donmar Ranches near Lac La Biche proposed an on-farm demonstration project to evaluate spring seeded oats, winter wheat and fall rye for grazing purposes. The objectives were to determine economic returns of annuals and evaluate the productive value of the three annuals used for grazing purposes.

The annuals, seeded the third week of May, included 33 acres of Grizzly oats, 16 acres of Kodiak fall rye and 16 acres of Norstar winter wheat.

(Cont'd)

Annual pasture provides good returns (cont'd)

Beginning in mid-June 72 heifers were turned out to graze on the annuals that were divided into four pastures. Working on a rotational grazing system the cattle were moved every eight to 10 days. In late August 43 heifers were pulled out and sold, leaving 29 heifers in the pasture. In late September 11 cow/calf pairs were added to the grazing demonstration. Grazing continued until October 25. Rainfall during the growing season was 7.5 inches.

Although it cost $58.30 an acre to establish the crop, the Lac La Biche DA says beef production on the heifers was about 235 pounds per acre. He estimated the grazing cost at about 26 cents per pound of gain.

The average daily gain for the heifers from June 15 to August 22 was 2.17 pounds, while for the remaining heifers the gain was two pounds per day from August 23 to October 22. This is similar to what animals would gain on permanent pasture.

Yoder says as a temporary measure, while permanent pasture is being improved or developed, planting and grazing annuals makes sense.

"Generally the cost per pound of gain will be higher using annuals versus perennials because of the higher cash inputs of establishing annuals each year," says Yoder in his report. "Because of the yearly establishment costs, grazing annuals should be considered as an emergency or supplementary pasture in conjunction with permanent pasture."

He says to maximize beef production it is important that annuals be rotationally grazed. Pastures can be created by using inexpensive electric fencing and the animals soon become accustomed to being moved from pasture to pasture.

For more information on the grazing demonstration contact Yoder at the Lac La Biche district office at 623-5218.

Contact: Harvey Yoder
623-5218

February 16, 1987
For immediate release

Trickle irrigation on the increase in Alberta

Small-fruit producers thinking of installing a trickle irrigation system should make sure they do their homework before investing several thousands of dollars and then find out they have a problem.

A specialist with Alberta Agriculture says following a few guidelines and getting expert advice as needed could save a lot of grief and increase profit potential down the road.

"Trickle irrigation is relatively new to Alberta," says Dennis Roll, a regional irrigationist with the department in Airdrie. "But each year greater use is being made of this efficient method of applying water, especially among the province's saskatoon and small fruit producers. Some of these producers have installed relatively large systems in the past few years."

Compared to the flamboyant image of pivot irrigation towers and wheel moves that roll over crop land and deliver several thousands of gallons of water per hour in a pressurized spray, trickle irrigation is a relatively subtle method of watering crops. Most applicable on a smaller scale, it involves a network of piping, with spaced outlets, that lays on the ground and delivers a small flow - a trickle - of water to individual plants, shrubs and trees.

"It is expected the expansion of trickle irrigation in the province will grow along with the development of the small fruit industry." says Roll, "So it is important that individuals who plan to develop such projects do so in a way that will result in obtaining maximum returns over the life of the orchard."

The specialist says the irrigation system will be the largest single investment cost in the development of the orchard. Depending on the amount of automation, some systems can cost up to $2,000 per acre. Since it will be three years or more before any returns are expected, planning of the orchard and the irrigation system should be integrated to minimize the investment costs and make the best use of the system when it is installed.

(Cont'd)

Trickle irrigation on the increase in Alberta (cont'd)

Roll says anyone planning the development of a saskatoon or small fruit orchard who intends to use trickle irrigation, should consider a few points before seedlings are set out.

- Soil and water

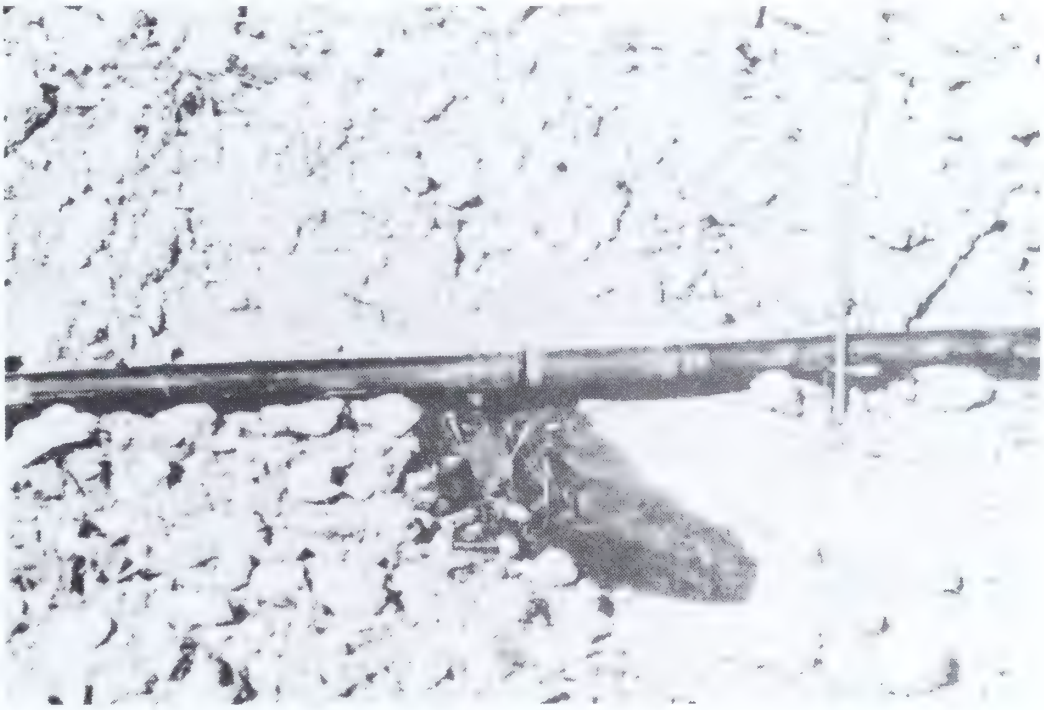
  Both the soil and water must be suitable for irrigation. Selection of the orchard location and a suitable water source should be made on the basis of a chemical analyses of the available soil and water resources. Surface water (runoff) is usually more suitable than groundwater sources. All well water sources should be tested as these are not usually suitable for irrigation.

- Field layout

  Row direction should be planned to accommodate the irrigation laterals. For trickle systems this is best achieved by planning the row directions so they will be reasonably level, or at least have a uniform slope. This will enable water to be applied uniformly with the system. On fields with rolling or irregular topography it is difficult to obtain uniform water applications. The use of pressure compensating emitters may provide acceptable application uniformity in some of these situations.

  The length of a trickle lateral (and hence the crop row) is determined by such factors as the diameter of the lateral tubing, number of emitters, flow rate, operating pressure and field slope. Half inch diameter laterals are the most common (and least expensive). Due to the above factors their length is usually limited to between 300 and 500 feet. For longer rows, larger diameter tubing can be used or the system can be designed to operate in a series of blocks, each having laterals in the above length range.

(Cont'd)



It's not a leak in the garden hose, it's a section of trickle irrigation pipeline emitting a small amount of water to a single saskatoon seedling

- Irrigation Licenses

  Projects which are larger than one acre should be licensed as an irrigation project in compliance with the Water Resources Act. Licensed projects allow the operation to divert a given quantity of water each year from the water source. Due to the tremendous water saving with trickle irrigation as compared to other methods, the licensing process usually is much faster.

Assistance in planning and designing trickle irrigation systems can be obtained from any of the irrigation specialists with Alberta Agriculture's irrigation branch.

Contact: Dennis Roll
948-8540

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

February 16, 1987
For immediate release

Different lice require different treatment

Because not all lice are created equal farmers should be aware that different methods of insecticide application may be needed to rid their cattle of the tiny pests.

Dr. Ali Kahn, an entimologist with Alberta Agriculture in Edmonton, says with a growing trend toward injectable insecticides farmers are missing some species of lice that are unaffected by this control measure. He says it doesn't necessarily mean different chemicals are required, just different application methods.

"Injectable insecticides do not control chewing lice," says Khan. "For the last three years there has been an increase in infestations of chewing lice in Alberta cattle herds.

"This increase in infestation is correlated with the increase in use of the injectable insecticides such as Ivomec and Warbex for warble and sucking lice control."

An injectable insecticide is a systemic control measure which means the chemical is carried in the animal's circulatory system. These chemicals are designed to control pests that feed on an animal's blood. Since chewing lice do not feed on blood they are not controlled by injectable insecticides.

However, Khan says when systemic insecticides are applied to the animal's coat as topical sprays or pour-ons, they leave residue in the hair and skin that will provide total or partial control of sucking and chewing ice.

He urges cattlemen who used injectable insecticides last fall for the control of warbles or sucking lice to inspect their cattle for chewing lice infestations.

"Chewing lice are very mobile insects and spread their infestations to most areas of the animal's body and throughout the entire herd," says Khan. "They also complete their life cycle faster than sucking lice.

(Cont'd)

"Through a careful examination of the animal's shoulder, back and tail head, by parting the hair with your fingers, you'll be able to see if there are any small reddish brown insects against the animal's skin."

Khan says during the past 10 years cattlemen have been using more spotton than pour-on control methods for warbles.

Spotton treatment involves a low volume application of a highly concentrated insecticide that is usually applied in one small spot on the back or shoulder of the animal. Pour-on refers to application of a large volume of a low concentration insecticide that is applied to the entire back of the animal.

Comparison of two types of lice

	Sucking lice	Chewing lice
BODY SIZE	Large, 1/8" long	Small 1/16" long
COLOR	Slate-blue	Reddish brown head, pale body
HEAD	Short with a beak	Large with chewing mouth parts
LEGS	Powerful with claws	No claws
FEED ON	Liquid blood	Solid material such as hair, loose scales, clotted dried blood

(Cont'd)

Different lice require different treatment (cont'd)

"Unlike pour-on, spotton leaves negligible dermal residues on skin and hair and injectable leaves no residue at all," he says. "When these two treatment methods are used, a follow up treatment with a pour-on such as Lysoff or an insecticide dusting on the back of the animal will control chewing lice."

Identifying the type of lice before applying a treatment can save money, labor and time, he says. He described a recent case where a second injectable insecticide treatment was given by a producer trying to control a herd louse problem.

"But he didn't realize he was dealing with chewing lice and injectable insecticides do not control chewing lice. It certainly can be a frustrating and costly mistake."

Khan says a producer should seek out a specialist to make a positive identification of the lice, but there are general features to look for.

Sucking lice are about an eighth of an inch long, are slate-blue, have a short head with a beak, have powerful legs with claws and feed on liquid blood.

Chewing lice are about a sixteenth of an inch long, have a reddish brown head and pale body, have a large head with chewing mouth parts, their legs have no claws and they feed on solid material such as hair, loose scales and clotted dried blood.

For details on the biology, life cycle, economic losses and control methods see Alberta Agriculture's publication, Control of Cattle Lice, #FS420/651-2. It is available from the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5T6, or from the department's district offices.

For further diagnostic services for cattle lice contact a district agriculturist, an agricultural fieldman, one of the department's regional laboratories or send material to Dr. Khan's office at the J.G. O'Donoghue Building, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, T6H 5T6.

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Contact: Dr. Ali Khan
427-9051

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

February 16, 1987
For immediate release

Ag Expo one of the best in Canada

One of the most extensive agricultural shows in Canada, gets underway in Lethbridge in early March for a four day run.

Ag Expo '87 kicks off March 4, at the Whoop Up Exhibition Park, with about 300 exhibitors on hand to show the latest in agricultural products, services, machinery and technology.

Sponsored by Alberta Agriculture, Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce and Lethbridge and District Exhibition, Ag Expo is expected to draw nearly 90,000 people through the doors from March 4 to 7.

Linda Barvir, Alberta Agriculture's district home economist in Lethbridge and a member of the Ag Expo organizing committee, notes that the International and Provincial Seed Fair will again be held in conjunction with the agricultural exposition.

In 1971 Ag Expo had 43 exhibitors and 153 seed samples, says Barvir. In 1987 the seed fair is expecting 300 exhibitors and about 500 seed samples from around the world as well as some of the best pedigreed seed produced in Alberta.

Along with the machinery and products displays, several short courses will be offered Ag Expo participants, says the home economist.

March 4, Crop Alternatives '87 will be offered from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. with Alberta Agriculture's special crop specialist, Blair Roth, discussing the crop alternatives farmers face in light of depressed prices in the cereal industry.

March 5, New Pests in Crops for '87 will be offered from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. as department entomologist Mike Dolinski and plant pathologist Ieuan Evans will discuss insects and diseases and problems to watch for this coming crop year.

(Cont'd)

Ag Expo one of the best in Canada (cont'd)

March 6, Regional Barley Seminar '87 will start at 10 a.m. and run through the afternoon. Dr. Ken May, barley breeder with Agriculture Canada and Doug Radke, Alberta Agriculture's assistant deputy minister, planning and development, will open discussion on the theme "where are we headed?".

March 7, Eating For The Health Of It, will be offered from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. with Helen Bishop MacDonald, a nutrition columnist with the Calgary Herald, explaining why even farmers need to be reminded about good nutrition.

All short courses will be offered in the Colonel MacLeod Room in the exhibition grandstand and admission is free.

For further information on Ag Expo or the seminars contact Linda Barvir in Lethbridge at 381-5237.

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Contact: Linda Barvir
381-5237

February 16, 1987
For immediate release

Who will survive?

What image does the farmer project to the urban media and consumer? Does the shaky and fractured lobbying of farm groups do any good? Is the big farmer seen as a barracuda waiting for his smaller neighbors to fail so he can cash in on bargain-priced assets? Is it possible to develop a rural spirit of co-operation in which farm couples can be helped to rebuild their lives the way barns and houses are rebuilt?

To farm couples like Ellen and Fred Mueller of Lacombe, this type of question is becoming as important as the production and management decisions farm couples have always dealt with.

As times get tougher not only do management skills need to be improved, but farm couples need to develop a strong sense of self, building family ties and feel the support of their neighbors and the whole agricultural community.

The Muellers, who operate a grain and custom feeding operation, say they look to conferences like Alberta Agriculture's Managing Agricultural Technology For Profit (MATFP) to help them in all three areas.

The annual conference, set for March 29 to April 1 in Banff, provides up to date information on production and technology, develops interpersonal and human resource skills and provides an opportunity for an honest exchange of information between farm families from across Alberta.

Anita Lunden, with the Alberta Agriculture farm business management branch in Olds, co-ordinator of the 1987 conference, says it's the feelings of those who have attended the MATFP in the past that really tell whether the conference is of value.

Ellen Mueller finds herself recommending the conference to young farm couples when she sees financial problems causing stress, and strained relationships.

(Cont'd)

Who will survive? (cont'd)

"The husband might be trying to keep financial problems from his wife, who has traditionally looked after the house and children, leaving business decisions to him," says Mrs. Mueller. "When he confides in her, their roles inevitably change. The wife must learn new skills as she tries to help with the farm. Both might seek off-farm jobs. As a result of these changes household and parenting roles must be shared."

Mrs. Mueller says it is a conference like MATFP which helps farm couples not only identify the problems, but come to terms with the changes that lie ahead and realize they are not alone.

Conference topics that deal with farm family communications, changing roles, parenting, financial management and planning can help smooth the transition.

"Kathy and Doug Robertson farm with Doug's parents near Carstairs," says Lunden. "Kathy credits the conference with improving their ability to deal with the problems that can arise when two generations operate a farm business. In fact, Kathy and her father-in-law are now asked to lead seminars to help others."

Both Robertson and Mueller who have attended the conference for four and eight years, respectively, say they value the communication between participants at the conference.

"It's not like talking to your neighbor," says Kathy Robertson. "It's very honest. You don't have to pretend everything's okay and that everything you try has been a success."

During bearpit sessions, coffee breaks and meals, it's talk, talk, talk as this mixture of people exchange information, ideas and opinions. Virtually every sector of the agricultural community is represented.

The conference, now in its 10th year, is traditionally held in the Banff area (this year it is at the Banff Centre).

"Participants look on it as a learning experience and a holiday," says Lunden. "A break from the farm before spring work begins.

(Cont'd)

Who will survive? (cont'd)

"Past participants consider the cost of the conference an investment in the farm family and the farm business. The cost of accommodation, meals and registration amounts to about as much as new truck tires and a few hours in the shop, or half a month's wages for a hired man, or two tons of fertilizer. One new idea from the conference could easily save a farm operation this much in one year."

For more information on the conference and registration forms contact an Alberta Agriculture district office or the farm business management branch of Alberta Agriculture in Olds, 556-4247.

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Contact: Anita Lunden
(403) 556-4276

February 16, 1987
For immediate release

Publication lists credit alternatives

To help producers compare alternative sources of credit available for farm business, Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch has updated its publication, "Sources of Farm Business Credit in Alberta".

The publication outlines the credit sources and options that are available to farmers in this province. It also offers some advice on where to get financing for credit needs that are not covered by the more traditional agricultural lenders.

The first part of the publication outlines some key rules for the sound use of credit and provides tips to be considered when dealing with creditors.

A center-fold chart summarizes long-term financing that is available to farmers at banks, credit unions, treasury branches and government agencies.

"Of particular interest to many farmers will be the availability and terms of fixed interest rates, and allowances and penalties for prepayment at the various financial institutions," says Wanda Johnston, with the farm business management branch in Olds.

The booklet also outlines some of the financial management counselling services provided by the public and private sector.

Johnston says 1986 appears to have been 'the year of farm credit stability', with both provincial and federal lending agencies bringing out new programs.

"On the federal scene, the Farm Credit Corporation offered some stability with the introduction of the commodity-based loan program," she says. "This program is designed to reduce annual payments by reducing the interest rate to as low as six per cent, and indexing the annual payments to commodity prices over the next 10 years.

(Cont'd)

Publication lists credit alternatives (cont'd)

"Provincially there is the Alberta Farm Credit Stability Program, which allows farmers to refinance and restructure existing debt incurred in farming before July 31, 1986 at a nine per cent interest rate, fixed for up to 20 years. This long-term fixed rate farm finance program will reduce and stabilize the cost of borrowed capital."

Copies of Sources of Farm Business Credit in Alberta, Agdex 832, can be obtained from Alberta Agriculture district offices, the farm business management branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0; or by writing the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

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Contact: Wanda Johnston
556-4240

Feburary 16, 1987
For immediate release

Agri-News Briefs

KEEP DUTCH ELM DISEASE OUT

It's good to keep the home fires burning, but specialists with Alberta Agriculture warn woodcutters not to haul firewood into the province. They say so far Alberta has been lucky to avoid the devastation of a fungus that kills elm trees. Dutch Elm disease is carried by bark bettles that live on elms. The disease is widespread through other parts of Canada and the United States. Department specialists say the best way to solve the problem is to keep it from entering Alberta. They ask people who might be hauling any type of firewood from the U.S. or other provinces to leave it at the border or burn it before they enter Alberta. The warning applies to all firewood because often it is hard to distinguish what species of tree the firewood came from. For further information contact Brooks at 362-3391 or Edmonton at 427-5350.

LITTLE ROYAL AT LAKELAND

Tours of the 32-cow dairy operation will be one of the features for visitors attending Lakeland College's open house in March. The milking set up which has won several plaques and certificates for its quality production, will be open for inspection March 20 to 22 during the college's Little Royal. The dairy is often used as part of the Alberta Agriculture farm apprenticeship training program, known as the Green Certificate Program. For more information on the open house or other special tours at the Vermilion-area college call 853-8450 or 853-8595.

(Cont'd)

TREES RAISED FOR ARBOR DAY

The Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre at Oliver, just northeast of Edmonton produces about 40,000 seedling conifers annually for distribution and planting by Alberta school students on Arbor Day in May. The seedling-sized spruce and pine trees are given to selected grades for planting in school grounds and community parks. Most of the seedlings are planted in Edmonton and Calgary where the city parks departments ready the tree seedlings for distribution to the schools. The Edmonton Parks Department was presented with the "Gold Leaf Award" from the International Society of Arboriculture for its outstanding support of Arbor Day.

WHEAT SEEDED IN ZERO TILLAGE CONDITIONS

The Agriculture Canada research centre in Lethbridge is planting winter wheat in stubble to assist in developing new varieties that do well in both zero tillage and fallow conditions. Zero tillage involves seeding a crop into the uncultivated stubble of a previous crop. Dr. J.B. Thomas, the wheat breeder heading the project, says zero tillage has advantages because it helps conserve soil moisture and the trash on the ground minimizes wind and water erosion problems. Drawbacks to zero tillage include the cost of using herbicides to control weeds (as opposed to cultivation), the need to use special seeding equipment, and the potential for recurrence of insects and plant diseases out of the previous crop residue.

PUT A LITTLE PUNCH INTO LUNCH

In the daily grind of getting lunches ready for the family, Alberta Agriculture home economics branch suggests "juice cubes" for variety. The cubes are made by freezing fruit juices in ice-cube trays. They can be packed in the lunch in a jar or a plastic bottle. By noon the cubes will be thawed and ready to drink. Freeze more than one kind of juice and put different flavors of cubes together to create a lunchtime fruit punch. For other lunch ideas ask your district home economists for a copy of the "Lunch" booklet, Homedex 1121-14.

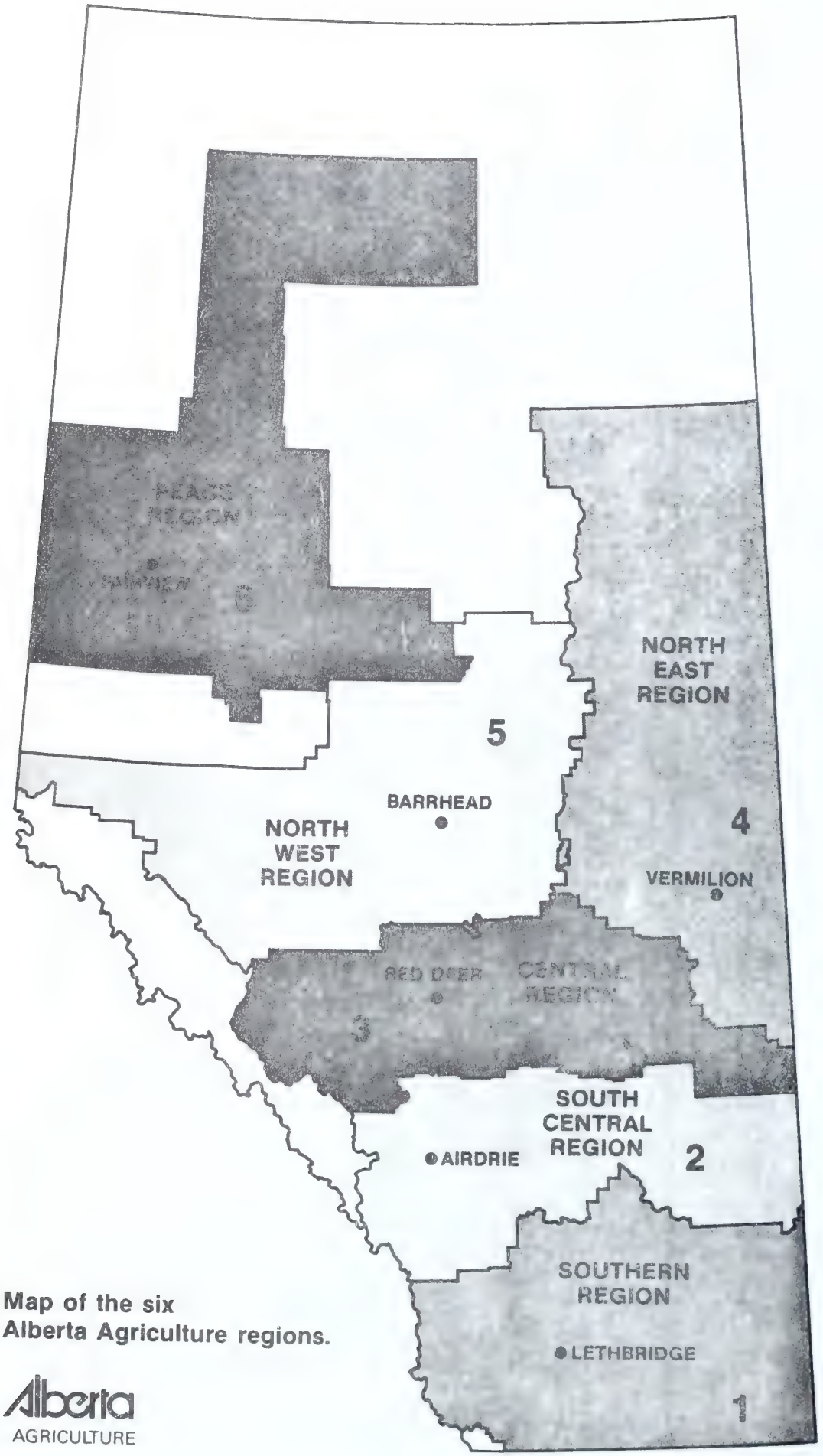
Note to editors and news directors

Attached, for your files, is a map of the province showing a general breakdown of agricultural regions, as defined by Alberta Agriculture.

Some editors and news directors have requested this type of map to help clarify references about "agricultural regions".

Generally the boundary of the regions follow rural muncipality boundaries, but consult your nearest district agriculturist for details.

The place name of the location of each regional office is also shown on the map.



Map of the six Alberta Agriculture regions.

Alberta
AGRICULTURE

AGRI-NEWS

CANADIANA
MAR 17 1987

February 23, 1987

For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

February 23, 1987
For immediate release

Soil moisture levels vary

Although soil moisture conditions appear to be good throughout most of Alberta, continued dry weather combined with spring cultivation could change the picture, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

Dick Heywood, a water management specialist with the department in Lethbridge says although spring is just around the corner, precautions should still be taken to conserve soil moisture.

"While the outlook for the 1987 season is optimistic, farmers are encouraged to check soil moisture conditions in their fields this spring," says Heywood. "Tillage should be minimized to reduce moisture losses and the potential for wind erosion."

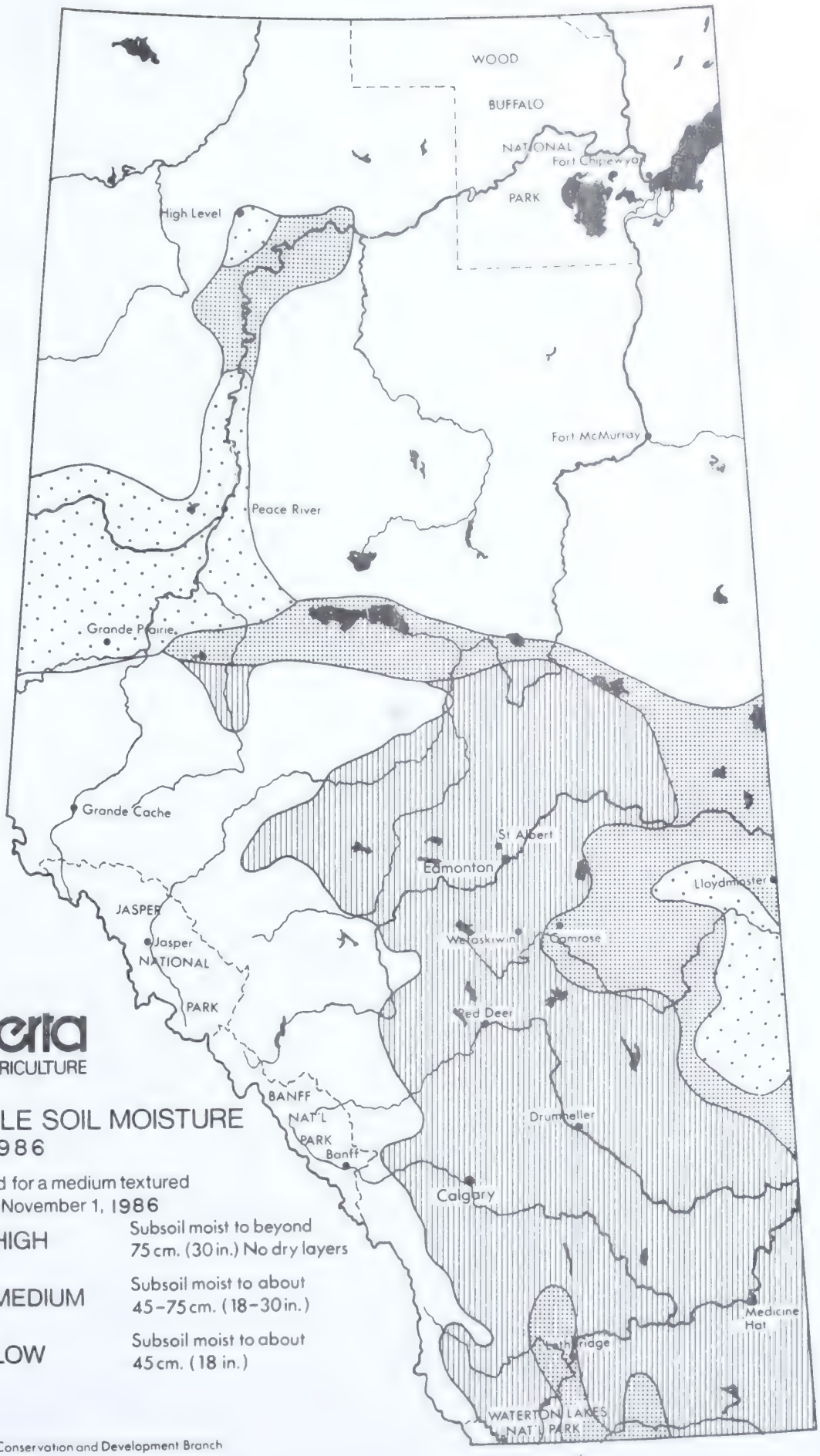
Alberta Agriculture's conservation and development branch has released a map indicating soil moisture conditions under stubble at the end of the 1986 season.

Most of central and southern Alberta has very good levels of stored soil moisture, with four to five inches of available water on both stubble and fallow. The notable exceptions are the Peace River Block and east central Alberta along the Saskatchewan border, where reserves on stubble are only two to four inches. However, conditions are better on fallow.

"Despite below normal precipitation so far this winter, subsoil moisture levels have not changed very much," says Heywood. "In southern Alberta surface soil moisture has been reduced by about 10 mm on stubble and 20 mm on fallow.

"These losses from the surface are not serious and can be replenished by spring rain. However, if the dry weather continues, there will be reduced run-off and surface water in the dry areas."

(Cont'd)



Alberta
AGRICULTURE

STUBBLE SOIL MOISTURE
FALL, 1986

Estimated for a medium textured soil as of November 1, 1986

HIGH	Subsoil moist to beyond 75 cm. (30 in.) No dry layers
MEDIUM	Subsoil moist to about 45–75 cm. (18–30 in.)
LOW	Subsoil moist to about 45 cm. (18 in.)

Compiled by Conservation and Development Branch

Soil moisture levels vary (cont'd)

Heywood says while the wet fall was responsible for the good soil moisture reserves, it meant little fall work was completed. Cultivation for seed-bed preparation this spring could result in a serious moisture loss. Dry seedbeds can cause poor or uneven germination, less than optimum weed control, and wind erosion.

For more information on the soil moisture situation contact Heywood in Lethbridge at 381-5154.

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Contact: Dick Heywood
381-5154

February 23, 1987
For immediate release

Red meat is essential to diet

Saying red meat and good diet in the same breath is not a contradiction for people concerned about their health, says an Agriculture Canada researcher.

Eating moderate amounts of meat as recommended by the Canada Food Guide is just one of the components that can contribute to a long and healthy life, says Dr. Steve Morgan-Jones, head of the red meats and beef production section of the federal research centre at Lacombe.

Morgan-Jones says eating recommended amounts of red meat is no guarantee of a longer life, but on the other hand it certainly won't kill you as has been, and continues to be, rumored in some nutrition circles.

The meat specialist says research has proven that eating meat is fundamental in meeting an individual's daily nutritional requirements.

Morgan-Jones made his comments at recent seminars in Edmonton and Calgary organized as part of Canadian Meat Month events.

He said the meat industry should accept the nutrition recommendations made by the Canada Food Guide and aim their production and products to fit those guidelines.

The meat production specialist says the fact that over the last 25 years more Canadians have moved to cities and urban centres and away from farms is part of the reason for the misunderstanding about red meat.

"For many people the closest they get to food production is at the local grocery store," he said. "Because of this urbanization trend there is lots of room for misunderstanding."

"With meat and meat products accounting for $8 billion in sales in Canada, the meat industry is western Canada's largest employer," he said. "But seldom do we hear the positive side."

Since 1963 the use of red meats, such as beef and pork has levelled off while the use of poultry has increased. Morgan-Jones said part of this trend is related to the controversy over health and diet and part of it is consumer preference.

(Cont'd)

Red meat is essential to diet (cont'd)

He said poultry is usually cheaper than beef and pork and it is often more convenient to cook.

Surveys show that Canadians now eat about 95 grams (about three ounces) of red meat per day which is close to the Canada Food Guide recommendation of 100 grams per day.

Morgan-Jones said the daily serving provides a good portion of recommended nutrient intake. The 100 grams per day provides 10 per cent of energy needs, 40 to 50 per cent of protein, 20 per cent of fat and 30 per cent of cholesterol.

He said people concerned about fat and calorie intake often have a misconception of what will put on the pounds. A recent U.S. study of people eating at salad bars compared to hot meals, showed they were getting more calories from the salad bars than the regular dinner. Morgan-Jones said this was because of the extra oil and other salad dressings used.

He also noted that in recent years the consumption of cheese, which is 30 per cent fat has increased dramatically.

The concern over cholesterol in today's red meats is unfounded, he said. Animal liver is high in cholesterol but a daily serving of routine beef, pork or lamb cuts has about the same cholesterol content as chicken or turkey.

With even leaner meats proposed, research now is looking at whether there is any difference in the quality of meat as fat is removed. Morgan-Jones said preliminary studies have shown there is little change in flavor and tenderness of pork as it is made leaner although tests indicates this may not be true with beef.

The Alberta campaign to raise awareness of the nutrition value of meat, during Canadian Meat Month in February, was sponsored by Alberta Agriculture, Agriculture Canada, the Beef Information Centre, Alberta Pork Producers Marketing Board, Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission, the Alberta Cattle Commission and the Canadian Meat Council.

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Contact: Susan Kitchen
297-8452

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

February 23, 1987
For immediate release

You can count on meat quality

No other consumer product sold in Canada comes under scrutiny as much as meat and poultry products, says a federal meat inspection official.

Dr. Neil McKie, assistant director, veterinary inspection, with Agriculture Canada says Canadian meat products just don't make it to the retail counter unless they meet strict quality standards at every step of the operation.

"Meat inspection means safety," McKie told recent seminars in Calgary and Edmonton. "But that inspection goes beyond just being safe. Canadian meat products are clean and wholesome and of good quality."

McKie made his comments as part of events marking Canadian Meat Month in February. He was among several speakers addressing the theme "Meat - The Facts."

The meat inspection service is part of the food hygiene program conducted by the federal government.

"Meat hygiene is a consumer service," McKie told the seminars. "The consumers expect meat to be from healthy animals and they expect it to be kept clean and of good quality through processing to consumption. They expect no adulteration in quality and truthful labelling in packaging."

McKie said meat inspection not only serves consumers but helps protect the meat and livestock production industry. The federal Meat Inspection Act maintains the quality of meat and the reputation of the industry. It allows producers and processors to export their products to other countries and it assures that meat products coming into Canada are also of good quality.

From its beginning in 1907 the meat inspection service now employees more than 320 veterinarians and 1,200 production inspectors across Canada who keep 570 slaughter houses and processing plants under inspection.

In Alberta there are 33 veterinarians and 44 production inspectors who keep tabs on 44 slaughter and processing plants, said McKie.

(Cont'd)

You can count on meat quality (cont'd)

The inspection service begins at the abbatoir level to ensure that only healthy animals are slaughtered. It continues through all phases of meat handling and processing to ensure quality is maintained.

McKie said if the meat is not acceptable at any point in the process it is condemned.

Meat hygiene program inspectors also look after several other related regulations in performing their duties. Along with guarding the quality of meat they also are responsible for animal health and disease problems, ensure that animals are treated humanely, administer the Food and Drug Act as it applies to meat and meat products, administer the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act and are responsible for poultry regulations.

The Alberta campaign during Canadian Meat Month was sponsored by Alberta Agriculture, Agriculture Canada, the Beef Information Centre, Alberta Pork Producers Marketing Board, Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission, the Alberta Cattle Commission and the Canadian Meat Council.

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Contact: Susan Kitchen
297-8452

February 23, 1987
For immediate release

Quilters sought for competition

Alberta quilters should sharpen their needles and plan to register soon for the first round of a provincial quilt competition to be judged this year.

The Canada Packers Alberta Quilt Competition will be searching the province for the top quilt to launch the company's newest quilt collection.

Canada Packers has spearheaded similar competitions in Ontario and Manitoba and established provincial quilt collections in those provinces.

Rae Hunter, chairman of this first annual Alberta competition, says the company is now planning to establish a collection of handmade quilts in this province. The competition is sponsored by the meat packing and processing company, the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies and Alberta Agriculture.

This is a two level competition, says Hunter. The preliminary competition will be conducted this year through fairs or other events sponsored by local chartered agricultural societies.

"The quilt winning first place in the preliminary competition will qualify to enter in the final provincial competition," said Hunter.

The final judging for the top provincial quilt will follow in early 1988, during the annual meeting of the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies.

Canada Packers will buy the final prizewinning quilt for $900. The company will also provide $100 to the local chartered agricultural society where the exhibitor of the "provincial champion" quilt first entered.

"Recognition of quilts winning at the local level will be the responsibility of the local agricultural society," says Hunter. "The local societies will provide prize money or ribbons or whatever they feel is appropriate. A list of participating agricultural societies will be available in March.

(Cont'd)

Quilters sought for competiton (cont'd)

"If there is no competition in the exhibitor's home community, they may enter the preliminary judging at the nearest fair or event that is participating in the competition."

The competition is open to all exhibitors who have lived in Alberta for at least a year. Eligible quilts, must be at least 185 cm by 200 cm (about 74 inches by 88 inches) and titled appropriately. The quilts have to have been made within 24 months of the competition.

Rules, regulations and a list of participating chartered agricultural societies are available from local agricultural society offices, Alberta Agriculture district offices or from the department's headquarters in Edmonton, at 427-2171.

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Contact: Rae Hunter
427-2171

February 23, 1987
For immediate release

Several factors affect calving ease

Although there is room for debate, ranchers and scientists agree that different management decisions will affect whether a first calf-heifer has problems calving.

At a recent seminar in Edmonton, selecting the bull and the heifer's feeding program, were cited as the two main factors affecting calving ease.

Dr. Richard Whitman an animal reproduction specialist from Montana told 300 producers attending the Alberta Beef Symposium after going to all the work and expense of raising a good replacement heifer "don't just put out any bull to breed her".

He said select a bull that will produce the right size calf for that heifer. A producer will not be able to eliminate all calving problems, but they will be minimized.

Whitman, manager of education programs for the American Simmental Association in Great Falls, also said research has shown that the breed of animal is no indicator of easy or difficult calving.

"When looking at calving ease we have found that regardless of breed about 30 per cent of heifers required some calving assistance. It is more important to take a look at the individual sires in the breed and make your decision on his qualities."

Whitman said the bull to cow ratio of 1:25 was developed in the 1930s and has been a good benchmark. However he said if a producer has a group of strong, healthy heifers selected for early breeding (and subsequently early calving) more bull power may be needed.

"It's important to the whole cycle of your beef operation to have early calves," he said. "Increasing the bull power to cover the heifers as quickly as possible is worth the cost. Get them bred early."

Whitman and Airdrie area rancher Dan McKinnon did not necessarily agree on what impact feeding has on calving ease.

(Cont'd)

Several factors affect calving ease (cont'd)

The former Montana University professor was asked whether cutting back feed to a pregnant heifer would cut back on the size of the calf and improve her ability to calf.

"You can't starve calving difficulty out of a heifer," he said. "My advice is to avoid extremes. Aim for that middle ground - that moderate to good condition on your heifers - and that should be adequate."

Whitman said research has shown that overfeeding a heifer does not necessarily make the unborn calf bigger. He says the calf will take whatever nutrients it needs from the mother, but extra nutrition may result in a fat heifer. He said some of this fat may be added to the heifer's pelvic area which would make calving more difficult.

However McKinnon said in his experience he once fed a group of bred heifers with a group of feedlot cattle that were on full rations. He said he had 50 per cent calving problems among that group.

"I don't know what it means scientifically, but I know I had problems," he said.

Dale Greig, a Barrhead area cattleman, told the meeting in providing calving assistance to a heifer, there is a difference between calf size and calving troubles.

"Not all the troubles you experience at calving time are because calves are too big to be delivered on their own," he says.

"We take a middle of the road approach. We don't limit feed to keep the calves small, nor do we overfeed our heifers."

Greig says calving ease is primarily controlled by genetics. He says on the first breeding cross the traits of the heifer's dam will largely determine the calf size.

The farmer said part of his criteria in selecting both male and female breeding stock is for their calving ease.

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Contact: Don Milligan
948-8530
Ross Gould
427-5335

February 23, 1987
For immediate release

Select heifers to breed early

Having a herd of cows that are all expected to calve early, doesn't eliminate the need to be a good livestock manager, but it does make the job of being an efficient beef producer easier, says a specialist from Montana.

Dr. Richard Whitman, a livestock reproduction specialist, told a recent Edmonton symposium the beef herd should be built around heifers that calve early.

Whitman says gearing an operation to have as many calves as possible on the ground in the first 20 days of the calving season, has real benefits.

He told farmers to pick whatever months or weeks they wanted for the calving period, but plan their operation so cows and new heifers coming into production are bred to deliver in the early part of that season. And he said don't be afraid to cull.

The early calves themselves are going to be older and bigger at weaning, making them worth more as market animals or herd replacements. He said for every 20 days late in calving, a calf weighs 20 to 50 pounds less at weaning.

And earlier calving means the cow will be better recovered from the trauma of delivery when the breeding season starts. The cow will have a better chance of cycling, becoming pregnant and remaining an early calver throughout her life.

Whitman, a former professor and researcher with Montana State University, is now manager of beef education programs with the American Simmental Association in Great Falls. He said producers should look to improve their herds by preparing replacement heifers for early cycling and high conception.

He says a key element in achieving this early cycling/high conception herd is proper animal nutrition and maintaining cattle in moderate to good condition.

(Cont'd)

Select heifers to breed early (cont'd)

"The best way to get early calving cows is to breed replacement heifers to calve early with their first calf," Whitman told about 300 producers attending the Alberta Beef Symposium. "For maximum lifetime production, heifers should be bred to calve first as two-year-olds. This means heifers must be cycling and conceive at 14 to 15 months of age.

"The rule to remember is, once early always early (and a lot of things will work in your favor), but once late always late," he said.

The Montana specialist said there are two factors that affect puberty in heifers - weight and age.

To have an animal reach puberty and be ready for breeding at 14 to 15 months she must be in proper condition. He said if a heifer is underfed or kept in thin condition it will take her longer to reach puberty - weight will be the determining factor.

However he said overfeeding and making the heifer too fat will not speed up maturity. In this case age would be the determining factor.

Whitman said the farmer should decide at what weight he would like his heifers to be bred, make sure he has the resources to feed them to achieve that weight and develop a feeding program to bring the heifer in moderate to good condition to that goal.

"Generally grow them out well," he said. "Feeding is 10 per cent science and 90 per cent art. Use your judgement and decide what weight condition looks good to you. The heifers may appear a little heavier earlier in the winter, but then they'll be able to handle cold stress better and be just about the right weight when breeding season starts."

He also said if possible a producer should keep more replacement heifers than are needed, to provide some selection.

"If you want 15 replacement animals wouldn't it be nice to have them all calving early. If possible keep as many replacements as you can and then when pregnancy testing select out those 15 that are going to calve the earliest. It will really help to improve the cow herd."

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Contact: Don Milligan
948-8530
Ross Gould
427-5335

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

February 23, 1987
For immediate release

Five main factors affect calf crop numbers

Greater "vigilance" on the part of beef producers will go a long way in increasing the number of calves weaned each year, says a livestock specialist from Saskatoon.

It's a long haul from the day a cow is bred until her calf is sold at the auction mart and even if a farmer gets a cow to conceive, his management work is just beginning, the researcher told a recent Edmonton conference.

Dr. Eugene Janzen, a professor in the department of herd medicine at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine said problems can develop at any one of five stages in the production of a calf crop.

Janzen, told about 300 producers attending the Alberta Beef Symposium a successful "calf crop" does not refer to the number of calves that hit the ground at calving time. It refers to the number of calves that make it to weaning as healthy, vigorous animals.

The researcher says the real measure of the term "calf crop" is the number of calves weaned compared to number of females exposed to a bull. He said although his comments were primarily addressed at replacement heifers, they could also apply to mature cows.

Jansen said the five factors that reduce calf crop are: failure of the cow to conceive; failure of the cow to carry the calf through gestation; failure to calve successfully; failure to brand (the calf is lost prior to branding) and failure to wean (the calf dies before it reaches weaning age).

Discussing each factor, Janzen said assuming the cow has had proper nutrition, failure to conceive could mean a problem with the bull, it could mean there is an infectious disease involved, or it could be the affect of growth implants.

He said growth implants can affect the fertility of replacement heifers, although the degree of problem is inconsistent. He told producers, that among heifers given growth implants there is minimal difference in fertility some years and a major difference other years.

(Cont'd)

Five main factors affect calf crop numbers (cont'd)

Failure for the cow to carry the fetus through gestation was blamed on two factors. Either the fetus was aborted or the technician doing the pregnancy test made a miscall.

Janzen said it is best to make the preg test as late as possible after the end of the breeding season to allow the technician or veterinary to get the best reading.

The specialist said although there are several factors that cause abortion, the majority - about 57 per cent - go undiagnosed.

The two leading reasons for losing a calf at birth, or failure to calve, is that the calf may be too big to be delivered or it takes too long to be born and suffocates.

Janzen said this is a key area where vigilance on the part of the farmer pays off. If the heifer is having trouble because the calf is too big, early action will save the calf and cow.

As far as the cow or heifer taking too long to deliver, Janzen said this is often a problem of poor nutrition.

"If groceries have been limited the heifer is not able to push that calf out easily. She may not have the strength and the calf dies from lack of oxygen."

The WCVM professor said diseases are the main reasons calves don't survive to branding age. These include diseases such as septicma, neonatal diarrhea, pneumonia and navel ill, as well as starvation and hypothermia.

Although calf losses are minimal between six weeks and six months of age, infectious diseases such as bovine respiratory disease and blackleg can take their toll.

Janzen told producers they can take steps to minimize the problems. First choose good, healthy replacement heifers. Evaluate bulls to make sure they are performing properly.

Have cattle pregnancy tested and cull those that are either open or expected to be late calvers.

(Cont'd)

Five main factors affect calf crop numbers (cont'd)

Have the cause of an aborted fetus diagnosed. Know why it happened. Have autopsies performed on any calves lost after birth to again determine the problem.

Producers need to be on their toes at calving time. Janzen said failure to calve successfully is not the heifers fault "it's a lack of vigilance" on the part of the farmer.

He said there were a few indicators which also meant it was time to worry and take action.

"Treat an abortion as if it were the beginning of an abortion storm," he said. "Find out what the problem was and be certain in your own mind that this loss was not just the beginning of many. A diagnosis can often lead to action that prevents other similar abortions."

Janzen also said if sudden death among either cows or calves amonts to more than half a per cent of herd numbers it should be checked out with a veterinary.

If there is more than a one per cent stillborn rate, it is too many. If there are greater than two or three per cent "dummy calves" - calves that are slow and need to shown such things as how to feed - it is time to find out why.

If there are greater than two or three per cent post-calving complications, a veterinary should be consulted. Janzen said post-calving problems refers to such things as uterine prolapses.

"Know where your biggest losses are occurring and do something about it," he said.

The Alberta Beef Symposium was sponsored by Alberta Agriculture and the Alberta Cattle Commission.

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Contact: Don Milligan
948-8530
Ross Gould
427-5335

February 23, 1987
For immediate release

Calving losses can be minimized

Alberta beef producers shouldn't just settle for live calves, they should manage their operations to produce "lively" calves says a Saskatchewan beef specialist.

Dr. Eugene Janzen told Alberta cattlemen at a recent conference in Edmonton that poor management increases death losses and the number of "dummy" or "stupid" calves that are born.

He said by watching the mother's nutrition and being on the ball at calving time, losses and headaches can be reduced.

He listed some key indicators to help a producer decide when a mother is having real calving difficulty. He said his comments were directed more at first-calf heifers, because the good condition cow herd should be past most of the calving problems.

Janzen is a researcher and professor of herd medicine at the Western College of Veterinarian Medicine in Saskatoon. He spoke to producers attending the Alberta Beef Symposium.

Management of calving should include a three-pen rotation, he said. A producer should have three separate areas to handle the herd at calving time. There should be a wintering area where the cows are held before calving, a calving area, and a "mothering up" area for cows and offspring.

"It is important to have these three areas to prevent a high livestock density and an increased chance of disease," he said. "And the farmer or rancher should do some planning and preparation to make sure the three areas are ready as needed."

In preparing the calving area he said farmers should remove snow to allow the ground to dry. Bedding material should be available for use at calving time. And there should be adequate lighting in the calving area.

(Cont'd)

Calving losses can be minimized (cont'd)

"It may seem like a small point, but we found that in poorly lit areas, where it is difficult to perform good night-time surveilance, the mortality rates were higher," he told the meeting.

Janzen said producers should also provide facilities in case a heifer does need assistance. There should be easy access to a pen or a clinic area with a simple headlock stanchion and plenty of room for the producer or veterinarian to work.

"And this is where having a lively calf is important," ne said. "It is important for a mother to bond with her calf, because if she doesn't bond she won't look after it.

"If the calf has to be pulled it is important to have a lively calf that catches the heifer's attention. And you need to have a pen where the two can be left alone to let bonding take place."

In using a calf puller, the weight of an average size man should be enough to extract the calf, he said. If a greater pull is required, surgery may be the better route. He said delays in getting a calf out on the ground increase the risk of having "dummy" calves.

Janzen said in watching heifers over the calving period, there is a limit on how long a producer should let nature take its course, before providing assistance. He says if too much time passes during labor and delivery process, it is time for the producer to act.

Action is needed if the heifer has shown abdominal discomfort for more than eight to 12 hours. Action is needed if no calf is delivered within 90 minutes after the water bag appears. Action is needed if no progress is made in calving after the heifer has shown 30 or 40 minutes of severe straining. Action is needed soon after the calves feet and nose first appear and no progress in delivery is made. Action is needed if the heifer does not immediately bond with her calf.

Janzen said a good condition range heifer should only need about 40 minutes from start to finish to deliver a calf on her own.

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Contact: Don Milligan 948-8530
Ross Gould 427-5335

February 23, 1987
For immediate release

Bully for you

Getting a decent calf crop is the single most important factor to beef producers and selecting the right bull is three-quarters of the battle, says an Agriculture Canada bull specialist.

Unlike dairy and feedlot operators, the cattleman derives his entire income from calves born into the beef herd, says Dr. Glenn Coulter, a reproductive physiologist with the Lethbridge Research Station.

Coulter, speaking to about 300 producers at the recent Alberta Beef Symposium in Edmonton said although it takes two to tango, the bull actually is a bigger factor in the area of fertility.

He said there is a greater onus on the bull because one male is being counted upon to service 25 females or more. If his performance is not up to par the impact is more serious than if, for example, one female fails to conceive.

Coulter told producers the size of scrotal circumference is a key indicator of a bull's fertility. He also said bulls should be kept in moderate to good condition for best breeding performance and not be allowed to get fat.

He said the majority of bulls are able to produce calves, but the real issue is are they able to produce enough calves.

The reproductive specialist has developed a checklist farmers should follow when buying and using beef bulls:

1. Buy bulls from reputable breeders or bull sales where bulls have been examined for breeding soundness by professionals experienced in bull evaluation.

2. Examine the records of the sire and dam of bulls as to their fertility and growth performance of their progency.

3. Buy bulls with growth performance data, selecting those above average, i.e., those with indexes over 100.

(Cont'd)

Bully for you (cont'd)

4. Buy bulls that exceed the minimum standards recommended for scrotal circumference, preferably bulls that are at least average for breed and age. (He warned against selecting a bull with extremely large measurements, because extremes usually leads to problems.)

5. Buy bulls with a scrotum having a distinct neck, rather than straight-sided or wedge-shaped. This is of particular importance in two-year-old or older bulls.

6. If buying British breed bulls, buy those having less than five millimetres backfat as yearlings and less than 10 mm back fat as two years of age or older. If buying continental breed bulls or crossbred bulls consider those with the least backfat.

7. Buy bulls with sound feet and legs that travel well. Bulls must be able to cover many miles of rough terrain.

8. Buy bulls with clear, bright eyes, an indicator of good health.

9. Buy useful bulls, not necessarily those that look fancy or have done well in a show.

10. Check seminal quality of all bulls before each and every breeding season.

11. Maintain bull batteries having bulls of similar age and weight.

12. Mix bulls to be used in a breeding group two or three weeks before the breeding season begins so their social dominance order is established before breeding starts.

13. Monitor bulls during the breeding season to ensure they have the desire (libido and serving capacity) and ability (free from injuries) to breed females.

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Contact: Don Milligan
948-8530
Ross Gould
427-5335

February 23, 1987
For immediate release

Don't skimp on the groceries

Farmers trying to cut corners by keeping cows thin are just asking for trouble, says a U.S. specialist on livestock reproduction.

Cattlemen will be money ahead by putting some good rations into their animals, especially in the weeks leading up to and following calving, says Dr. Richard Whitman, a former researcher with Montana State University.

Whitman says keeping a cow in moderate condition and meeting the nutritional needs of the mother and calf is a cornerstone in building an efficient and productive beef herd.

The specialist, who is now manager of beef education programs for the American Simmental Assocation in Great Falls, told about 300 Alberta livestock producers in Edmonton their top priority should be to feed their cows properly.

"Undernutrition is the number one reason for many of the problems livestock producers face," Whitman told delegates attending the Alberta Beef Symposium. "Many producers just aren't feeding to meet the nutritional requirements of their cattle. It leads to a condition that some people refer to as hollow belly."

All the components such as vitamins, energy, minerals and protein must be met in a balanced formula in order for the cow to meet performance expectations.

The speaker told producers they must set goals for their operation. Decide what they want to see as an end product in their cows and calves and then make plans to achieve that goal.

"Planning is important," he said. "If you set a target then you can see where you have to change things."

Building a productive and profitable beef operation "is not a random cookbook of ideas."

(Cont'd)

Don't skimp on the groceries (cont'd)

Whitman said a rancher should strive for two primary objectives:a/ get the highest percentage of cows to wean a calf, and b/ get the highest percentage of calves born as early as possible.

He said getting good healthy cows bred and calved out early is basic to the forumla which leads to a profitable operation.

A cow maintained in moderate to good condition that calves out early, should produce a healthy calf. Provided good nutrition is maintained, that cow will raise a big calf and be ready herself to be bred early when breeding season begins.

The cow will continue the cycle of having early calves, while her offspring, which should grow to be strong animals, will either make top of the line market calves or top of the line replacement heifers. The replacements, because they have a health and growth advantage should continue the tradition of being early calvers.

Whitman said the research and the experience of ranchers over the years has proven that groceries are not the place to cut costs. He cautioned that ranchers shouldn't waste money by trying to over feed cattle, because along with waste, cows that are too fat aren't good either.

But he said finding that middle ground - maintaining cows in moderate condition - is worth the production costs.

Whitman told farmers there are several aspects to consider when feeding cattle, but he emphasized the most critical period for proper nutrition is during the cow's last three months of pregnancy.

It is in the third trimester the fetus grows the most and requires the most nutrition. And the final 30 days is the greatest growth period of pregnancy.

"The fetus puts the demand on the cow and if the nutrition isn't being provided to the cow by the rancher than she will take it from whatever reserves there are in her own body," he said. "And her condition will decline."

(Cont'd)

Don't skimp on the groceries (cont'd)

He said it is particularly important for producers to keep their livestock in moderate to good condition in the months just before the cows calve and for two or three months after calving.

Whitman told ranchers rather than look at their cattle as one herd they should see it as several small herds. He says there are groups of cattle in one herd that have different nutritional requirements because of stage of pregnancy, age, physical size and different levels of body condition.

While a farmer can't feed for each group, he can feed to catch the broadest needs of his animals. He said if possible feed mature cows separate from first-calf heifers and feed fat cows separate from thin ones.

Whitman suggested two options for winter feeding schedules for pregnant cows.

In general terms, if the objective is for the cow to be in moderate to good condition to deliver a 70 to 80 pound calf, he said she should be on a balanced ration that allows her to gain about one pound a day over the 120 days before calving. This would allow the cow to meet her own needs as well as those of her unborn calf.

Or she could be fed to gain about two pounds a day over 60 days preceeding calving. Faster gain over a shorter period would best suit operations where the cows stay later in the season on winter pasture and crop residue.

The Alberta beef symposium was sponsored by Alberta Agriculture and the Alberta Cattle Commission.

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Contact: Don Milligan
948-8530
Ross Gould
427-5335

February 23, 1987
For immediate release

Short breeding season favored by producers

Keeping the breeding season short and sweet and not being shy about culling poor animals is the best management formula for two Alberta cattlemen who shared their experience with other beef producers at a recent Edmonton seminar.

Dale Greig, a farmer from the Barrhead area north of Edmonton, and Dan McKinnon, a rancher and feedlot operator from Airdie, just north of Calgary say they leave their cattle exposed to bulls no longer than 45 days.

The two men, addressing about 300 producers attending the Alberta Beef Symposium, also said any cows that fail to conceive or that show signs of other problems are automatically shipped.

The breeding and culling program of the two cattlemen is part of their individual plans to improve production efficiency. They also say they are firm believers in keeping their cattle in moderate to good condition.

Dale McKinnon, who owns the Three Cross Cattle Company at Airdrie, told the symposium he is pleased with the results of his beef management system.

Three Cross Cattle Ltd. is a forage production, cow-calf, custom feedlot and test station operation. It operates on three sections of land, has 940 acres in cereal forages, 365 acres in tame pasture and the balance in native grass and the farmsite.

The feedlot handles 2,000 head, almost all calves, with 1,060 of these being bull calves on performance testing.

The breeding herd consists of about 200 cows and 50 replacement heifers. The beef herd is a total cross bred program using all Beef Booster seed stock.

McKinnon told the symposium he divides his herd into seven individual breeding pastures and removes the bulls after 42 days exposure to the cows. He selects easy calving bulls to put with the heifers.

(Cont'd)

Short breeding season favored by producers (cont'd)

"Females are pregnancy tested at weaning, in early October, and all 'drys' or cows with foot, udder or other problems are shipped,' he said "The bulls used have all been fertility evaluated and most are two or three-years-olds. Calving problems have been minimal with about five per cent needing assistance."

Over winter the cattle are sorted into three groups for feeding. One group represents bred yearlings, another is first- and second-calf cows or some weaker mature cows and the third group is mature strong cows.

Although the rancher says the cattle aren't pampered their condition is not neglected.

"It is important to keep cows in good condition or improve their condition if they are thin," said McKinnon. "Everything we have runs out (on pasture) all the time and is expected to graze some. Hay, silage or straw are fed depending on price and supply along with range pellets. The pellets are used for energy and to balance the ration with minerals and vitamins. Selenium is fed year round.

"Keeping your herd in good shape is a benefit, not only for the unborn calf being carried, but also because the cows will breed back better. A cow in good condition weans heavier calves and also a much higher percentage of cows conceive earlier in the breeding season."

McKinnon also believes in weaning calves before they begin to affect the cow's condition.

"We wean at 180 days for several reasons," he told the seminar. "The calves get off to a better start in the feedlot before winter hits and have less health problems. The cows, especially the young ones, are not drawn down in flesh and have time to build fat before winter."

With a 42 day breeding season most calves are born within a 50-day period. To meet the increased energy need of cows after calving they are fed range pellets (14% barley) and/or grain and silage.

(Cont'd)

Short breeding season favored by producers (cont'd)

"With our program we are getting 91 to 93 per cent pregnancy on heifers and 93 to 97 per cent pregnancy on cows," he said. "Sixty per cent of the heifers calve in the first 21 days of calving season with the rest calving in the second 21 days.

"About one-third of the cows calve in the first 21 days and 90 per cent have calved by the end of the second 21 days."

McKinnon said while it is important to develop a management system it is also necessary to keep up to date with new ideas and to attend "to all the little details that make a complete program and lead to real progress."

Dale Greig and his wife Maureen operate a 110-head crossbred Simmental herd on about 750 acres west of Barrhead.

He told the symposium he wanted to cut back what was once a four month calving season to about five weeks for several reasons. Greig said the longer calving season was uneconomic, required too much labor and time management, showed an increase in sickness among late born calves and caused breeding delays.

Within a few years they had managed to reduce the breeding season to 45 days for cows and 24 days for heifers which cut the calving season to about five weeks.

With earlier and more uniform calves, his steers averaged 250-day weaning weights of 750 pounds in 1986 while the average weight on heifers was 740 pounds.

The Barrhead producer said the management program pays off in several areas. He said the period of checking the cows at calving is reduced; he has a more even package of calves to market; he is producing more pounds of beef; medical costs are lower; and earlier calves allow for more flexibility in marketing.

Contact: Don Milligan
948-8530
Ross Gould
427-5335

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

February 23, 1987
For immediate release

Don't take chances with trace minerals

With balanced nutrition a key element in the success of a livestock operation, Alberta beef producers have been told not to make any assumptions about their cattle needing mineral supplementation.

Four specialists in the field of trace minerals told about 300 cattlemen attending the Alberta Beef Symposium in Edmonton that guess work in supplementation can be expensive.

Providing minerals your cattle don't need may not only hazardous to their health, but a waste of money. Neglecting to provide adequate supplementation can seriously hurt production.

The specialists say the only sure thing is that cattle do need adequate levels of minerals and in a province like Alberta some level of supplementation is probably needed.

Having feed tested in a laboratory is one step in checking mineral levels. Depending on the mineral involved, blood tests may be necessary, liver tissue tests may be required and water and soil tests may also be needed.

Although it sounds like a testing nightmare, the procedures really aren't that difficult and the value of the information will far outweigh any time and money spent in having the analysis done.

Dr. John Maas, associate professor of large animal medicine at Oregon State University, told producers that a lack of selenium can show up in a wide range of herd health problems.

Dr. David Christensen, a professor of ruminant nutrition from the University of Saskatchewan, said copper and zinc deficiencies, although more difficult to balance, can affect growth and reproduction ability.

Dr. Larry Friscke of Innisfail gave a veterinary's view of mineral problems while Rick Corbett, a nutritionist with the animal nutrition section of Alberta Agriculture in Edmonton gave his perspective on mineral needs.

(Cont'd)

Don't take chances with trace minerals (cont'd)

Maas told producers a selenium deficiency can show up as several problems in production. The conditions range from white muscle disease in calves, to retained afterbirth, abortions, stillbirths, weak calves, diarrhea, ill thrift, low disease resistance, muscle weakness in cows and infertility.

"Each of these deficiency-induced problems represents a significant economic loss to cattlemen," he said. "Consider, for example, the loss of reproductive efficiency in your herd. It probably costs from $250 to $300 a year to maintain and breed one cow or heifer. If that cow aborts, or if her calf dies of white muscle disease, you will have lost your investment."

Maas said in severe deficiency cases, injectable selenium can be used to give an immediate boost to animals. He said the best plan is to provide year round supplementation, as needed, to keep mineral levels up.

Supplementation should be planned with the advice of a veterinarian.

Dr. Christensen told the meeting there is no generality that can be drawn about the need for copper and zinc. The amount of minerals available in feed can vary from area to area; the amount of minerals stored in an animal's body can vary from breed to breed.

"There is a widespread possibility of copper deficiencies and less good evidence that zinc deficiencies are widespread," he said. "A feed analysis can give a general indication, and a blood analysis will provide more information. But the best information on zinc and copper levels will come from analysis of liver tissue samples."

Copper and zinc deficiencies affect heat cycles and reduce fertility and sexual performance.

Christensen suggested having the livers of animals sent for slaughter tested to give an indication of how the rest of the herd is doing.

He said their is complex interaction between copper and zinc and other minerals such as sulfur and molybdeum. All these factors must be weighed in deciding levels of supplementation.

(Cont'd)

Don't take chances with trace minerals (cont'd)

The nutrition specialist said, although often neglected, manganese is another mineral that plays an important role in herd growth and reproduction ability.

From a veterinarian's viewpoint Dr. Frischke said there are many diseases and syndromes cattle can acquire because of mineral deficiencies.

He said the range of problems that can result from lack of trace minerals can be difficult to identify. Sometimes the minerals have a complex relationship with each other and sometimes more than one mineral or vitamin deficiency will produce the same symptom in an animal.

The Innisfail veterinary said feed should be analyzed, blood samples tested and post mortems performed on animals that do die, to give producers a better picture of what mineral supplementation is needed.

He said the best way to deal with deficiency problems is to prevent them from occurring.

"If you do nothing else then you certainly should feed trace mineralized salts in areas like Alberta where generalized deficiencies are known to exist," he said.

As a nutritionist, Corbett said cattlemen need to wake up to the importance of trace minerals and all round good nutrition for their animals.

"Most cattle producers in Alberta who are not making a conscious effort to supplement their rations with trace minerals, are likely experiencing problems with copper, zinc, manganese and possibly selenium deficiencies or at least are at risk of doing so.

"The question that each cattleman should be asking is 'what is my situation?'. Unless you can answer this question based on facts, the only reasonable conclusion you can draw is that you do have problems."

Corbett said the most practical way to find out if there is a trace mineral deficiency is to begin with a feed test and build a mineral supplementation program from there.

Contact: Don Milligan 948-8530 or Ross Gould 427-5335

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

February 23, 1987
For immediate release

Farmers should register for Banff conference

Alberta Agriculture's Managing Agricultural Technology For Profit conference is about solutions, not problems, says the conference co-ordinator.

"Because farm couples already know a lot about the problems they face, the conference concentrates on presenting alternatives they can apply to solve these problems," says Anita Lunden, with the department's farm business management branch in Olds.

The conference has been presenting farm couples, extension staff and agribusiness people with alternatives for 10 years. Lunden says participants look forward to this annual update on developments in agricultural technology and production, and new approaches to management and human relations issues.

Those who are registering for this year's conference at the Banff Centre, March 29 to April 1 consider it an investment in their farm's future. An investment that traditionally provides a good rate of return if even one alternative suggested can be successfully applied. Alternatives are being presented under the theme of People, Planning, and Profit.

"The conference usually fills up completely and anyone interested in registering should do so now", says Lunden.

Registration forms are available from district extension from district extension offices of Alberta Agriculture, Alberta Wheat Pool elevators, and the Farm Business Management Branch in Olds. A registration form and information on the conference will also be found in the next issue of Farm and Ranch Magazine distributed early in March.

For more information on the conference, contact Lunden at 556-4276.

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Contact: Anita Lunden
(403) 556-4276

February 23, 1987
For immediate release

Agri-News Briefs

ACCIDENTS CAN HAPPEN IN FARM HOME

Working around livestock and machinery are not the only accident risk areas on a farm says the Alberta Safety Council. As the council marks Home Safety Week, March 1 to 7, it reminds farm families that the home itself can be the scene of serious mishaps if care isn't taken. The council says falls are the leading cause of accidental deaths in the home and in the age group 65 and over, falls outrank motor vehicle accidents as a cause of death. The council suggests several ways to prevent accidents. Keep the home well lit. Stairways should have two good handrails. Keep floors clear of clutter. Scatter mats are a hazard and if they must be used, buy the non-skid type. Keep main traffic areas clear of obstructions. Use non-skid mats in the tub or shower. Don't stand on boxes or chairs to reach high items. Avoid carrying loads that block vision. Wear proper footwear at all times. Keep sidewalks and outside steps clear and in good repair.

ASK FOR SEED TEST CERTIFICATE

Farmers buying forage and other seeds don't need to wonder about the type and number of weed seeds they are getting in their seed mix, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist. Wayne Jackson, crop protection specialist with the department advises producers to simply make sure they get a seed testing certificate when buying seed. Jackson says before any seed can be given a grade, a germination test must be done and a sample of the seed must be analyzed to determine the number and kind of weed seeds present. Once graded, the information about the lot of seed as to weed seed content, percentage of germination and grade is recorded on a seed testing certificate. The buyer has every right to see this certificate before buying seed.

(Cont'd)

Agri-News Briefs (cont'd)

NO BEDDING SHAVES COSTS

An Airdrie-area rancher says eliminating bedding material for his cattle saves him 25 cents a day per head. Dan McKinnon says in his part of the country that enjoys Chinooks and drying westerly winds he doesn't feel the lack of bedding creates any hardship for his commerical cow-calf herd that is outside year round. He says he does provide some bedding material at calving time. McKinnon, speaking at the recent Alberta Beef Symposium said he has found that feeding his cattle in late afternoon encourages daytime calving. The owner of the Three Cross Cattle Ltd. said his herd is fed once a day at 4 p.m.. He estimated that three-quarters of the calves are born in the daytime or early morning.

NO PERSCRIPTION FOR SELENIUM

Recent changes in regulations affecting the use of selenium mineral supplement for cattle, now say a prescription is no longer needed when ordering a custom mineral formula from a feed company. Rick Corbett, a livestock nutritionist with Alberta Agriculture in Edmonton said up until about early February a farmer wanting a special mineral supplement containing more selenium than was allowed in an off-the-shelf premix had to obtain a veterinarian's perscription to have the formula made. Now Corbett says a producer can ask a feed company to make up a specific mix without prescription. He recommends however that the producer work with his veterinarian, a livestock nutritionist and feed company to develop the proper mineral formula for his herd.

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION ENOUGH FOR A LIFETIME

Farmers wondering what quantity of mineral supplementation is needed to keep a cow healthy, should realize that the daily requirements of some minerals doesn't represent a very big amount. Although the minerals are essential to good overall nutrition, Rick Corbett, a livestock nutritionist with Alberta Agriculture says a little can go a long way. As examples he says one ounce of copper will supply a beef cow with its requirements for 280 days. And if that sounds like a lot, one ounce of selenium is enough to supply a beef cow with its requirements for 38 years.

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

AGRI-NEWS

March 2, 1987

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For immediate release

This Week

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

March 2, 1987
For immediate release

Offset program corrects an imbalance

Alberta livestock producers still have to be efficient managers in spite of a provincial program that helps offset the distorted cost of feed grains, says a spokesman for Alberta Agriculture.

Wayne Dundas, a spokesman for the Alberta Feed Grain Market Adjustment Program (AFGMAP) in Edmonton says the program does not give Alberta producers an unfair advantage over their North American counterparts. He says it simply gives them a fighting chance in the market place.

Dundas says the AFGMAP compensates Alberta livestock and poultry producers for what the provincial government considers an "economic penalty" caused by a federal government subsidy to the railways.

The spokesman says the program takes Alberta producers "from a disadvantaged position to a neutral position" as far as being competitive in the market place is concerned.

In the complex agreement involving the Crow freight rate, the railways receive, under the federal Western Grain Transporation Act, a subsidy of $650 million to transport Canadian grain to export terminals.

Although it was recommended that this assistance known as the Crow benefit should have gone to producers, federal officials have opted to give it to the rail companies.

The Alberta government stepped in in 1985 with the Feed Grain Market Adjustment Program to reduce the burden on livestock producers who were faced with paying more for feed grains because of the price distortion caused by the payment of the Crow benefit to the railways. The net affect of the federal subsidy was to increase the price of grain for domestic users.

Dundas, says it's popular to bandy the word 'subsidy' when referring to the provincially-funded scheme which has paid out about $96 million since 1985 to more than 24,000 Alberta farmers.

(Cont'd)

Offset program corrects an imbalance (cont'd)

"But this really is a misleading term and a term that could cause greater problems down the road," he says. "The program is an offset program - it corrects an imbalance. The method of paying the Crow benefit creates a distortion and the program offsets that distortion. Those who receive the offset still have to be efficient producers to be able to sell their beef or pork on the international market.

It was announced that the Alberta Feed Grain Market Adjustment Program is being extended and modified this year. The program will continue as the AFGMAP until June 30 and then be known as the Crow Benefit Offset Program.

It will essentially be the same program, but the new name better reflects the purpose of the program, says the spokesman.

Under the AFGMAP producers will continue to receive an offset payment of $21 per tonne for feed grains up to June 30, 1987. When the Crow Benefit Offset Program comes into effect in July the offset will be reduced to $13 a tonne.

In establishing the payment per tonne, it was determined there has been a reduction in the amount of the actual distortion in the price of domestically traded feed grain caused by federal crow payment, as a result of greater supplies available in Western Canada.

Dundas says because of an increased supply of feed grain in Alberta this year, the actual level of distortion in the feed grain market should be less than the $21 per tonne now being paid to producers. The actual amount of distortion however cannot be calculated in advance.

The program is expected to cost the provincial government $47.5 million through the 1987-88 fiscal year.

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Contact: Wayne Dundas
422-0015

March 2, 1987
For immediate release

Annual meetings planned for sheep producers

Alberta sheep producers are urged to get involved in their respective regional annual meetings of the Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission, beginning in mid-March.

Along with elections in two zones for commission board members, directors are also looking for input on several issues.

The regional meetings are open to any sheep producer in the province, regardless of the size of his or her farm operation. If the producer sells sheep in Alberta, he pays the $1 check off collected by the commission and is entitled to be a voting member.

Among the issues to be discussed at the annual meetings are what work is being done to stop imports of fresh and chilled lamb from Australia and New Zealand and what use is made of the $1 check off collected by the commission.

Elections will be held in Zone 1 (southern Alberta) and Zone 4, (the Edmonton area) for the director's positions in those zones.

Any sheep producer living in those zones can be nominated or make a nomination and vote.

The meeting schedule is as follows:

Zone 5, at the Westlock Legion Hall in Westlock, March 17 at 7 p.m.; Zone 4, at Room #2, Nisku Inn, Nisku, March 18 at 10 a.m.; Zone 6, Courtesy Corner, Ryecroft, March 21, 1 p.m.; Zones 1 and 2 (joint meeting), Lethbridge Community College Animal Science Building on Jail Road, March 25 at 7 p.m. and Zone 3, Alberta Agriculture Regional Office in Airdrie, March 26 at 7 p.m..

For further information on the annual meetings contact a zone director of the commission office in Calgary at 291-2542.

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Contact: Will Verboven 291-2547
Cathy Gallivan 427-5077

March 2, 1987
For immediate release

Revolution faces dairy industry - Part 1

There's a revolution brewing in the dairy world that could have a major impact not only on the guys milking cows, but on every mom in the country who pours a glass of milk for her kids.

It is probably the biggest change facing the industry since dairymen hung up their three-legged milking stools and turned on vacuum milking machines.

It is an issue that takes terms like biotechnology out of a laboratory and into every urban and rural household in the country.

The coming revolution involves the use of a growth hormone that when given to dairy cows has the potential to increase milk production by as much as 40 per cent. Although still significant, some say a more realistic figure is an average 10 to 15 per cent increase in production.

On the surface it sounds like good news for dairymen, but experts say the ramifications of giving every milk cow in the country a daily dose of hormone to produce considerably more milk, are far reaching.

At this point they say there are far more questions than answers. Preliminary studies show there are several positive aspects from the use of the hormone, although in the other corner there is mounting concern over ethical, moral and economic issues.

On the plus side the hormone could, with relative ease and minimal expense, significantly increase milk production. Fewer animals would be required to meet milk production demands, making dairy farms more efficient and improving the margin of profit for farmers.

On the negative side U.S. experts are predicting that using growth hormones will, by the year 2000, force about half of the U.S. dairy farms out of business, eliminate nearly 200,000 dairy farm jobs and eliminate the need for about 10 million acres of crop land used to produce dairy cattle feeds.

There is also concern about the stress the hormone will place on animals and as one U.S. lobbyist says, the hormone will "intensify the cruelty to which factory-farmed cows are subjected today."

(Cont'd)

Revolution faces dairy industry - Part 1 (cont'd)

"This isn't a fly-by-night idea," says Brian Rhiness, Alberta Agriculture's, dairy production specialist. "There is a great deal of interest in this new technology."

Rhiness predicts the hormone will be available for general use within about five years. Just about every dairy research organization in the world is studying some aspect of how to use the hormone and what it will mean to the industry and consumers.

In Canada, the University of Alberta in Edmonton, the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, The University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph, Macdonald College in Montreal, the Lennoxville Research Station of Agriculture Canada and the regional development branch of Agriculture Canada are all researching some aspect of using the hormone.

"There are many concerns and questions that have to be dealt with," says Rhiness. "If we have the ability now to produce too much milk what it is going to mean when we can increase milk production by 40 per cent?

"Use of the hormone can be a good thing, under a supply management system, if we temper it with a corresponding reduction in the number of cows needed on a dairy farm. It should make dairy farms more efficient. But if we try to maintain the same number of cows in production and use the hormone, it will only create chaos."

Rhiness says the research now being done is intended to resolve many of the uncertainties, before growth hormones become commercially available. He expects the research results will ease any doubts that exist, making growth hormones a realistic management option in the dairy industry future.

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Contact: Brian Rhiness
352-1223

March 2, 1987
For immediate release

Hormone is natural product - Part Two

In an age when many artificial ingredients are included in daily diets, it's ironic that the latest technology which promises to revolutionize the dairy industry is something very natural.

A growth hormone that has dairy producers, processors and researchers in a buzz these days, and eventually will affect consumers, is actually one of those naturally produced stimulants like adrenalin.

Gordon Macleod, with the department of animal and poultry science at the University of Guelph, says researchers have known for about 50 years that extracts from the pituitary gland containing the growth hormone, bovine somatotropin, when injected into cows, will increase milk production.

But in the last few years there has been renewed interest in developing a method of producing and administering the growth hormone so it becomes accessible to every dairy farmer in the world.

The net affect, when the hormone becomes available will be to increase milk production. It may be used to improve production efficiency - fewer cows producing the same amount of milk - or it may result in over production.

There have been some short term studies that indicate milk production can be increased as much as 40 per cent, although experts say that a 10 to 15 per cent production increase is more realistic.

Macleod says while the common use of the hormone may arouse a range of economic and ethical issues, the use of the hormone does not pose health problems for the animal or consumer.

The public can have an emotional reaction to the use of hormones, say experts noting that not all hormones are the same. The sometimes controversial steroid hormones used to put more pounds on beef cattle, are quite different from the protein hormones used to increase milk production in dairy animals.

(Cont'd)

Hormone is natural product - Part 2 (cont'd)

American Cyanamid of New Jersey is among the drug manufacturers involved in growth hormone research. David Walton, the firm's marketing manager says there is barely enough hormone produced now for research purposes.

The two major hurdles for researchers is finding a way to genetically engineer production of the hormone so adequate quantities are available for routine use. Secondly they have to develop a convenient and inexpensive way to administer the hormone to the animal.

Research animals are now given a daily injection of the hormone, but Walton says the objective is to develop a product that can be administered every 30 to 90 days.

He projects the on-farm price of the hormone at 20 to 30 cents a dose per cow per day. The net return, after feed and labor would be about 50 cents per cow per day.

Walton estimates some company will have to invest up to $500 million to build the plant and equipment needed for global capacity. So far no one has made the commitment.

While the use of growth hormone is expected to improve milk production and dairy farm efficiency, the stimulant does not offer a free ride.

If the cow is expected to produce more milk, its nutritional requirements and feeding costs will increase as well. Producers will have to increase their level of management to keep pace with production efficiency.

Dr. Lew Mix, director of farm management research and development with Agway Incorporated, Syracuse, New York, says when the growth hormone hits the market, dairy producers won't have much choice.

To remain competitive, Mix says, dairy farmers will have little choice but to adopt this new technology. He predicts within five years 80 per cent of U.S. dairy cows will be receiving the hormone and 100 per cent will be receiving it in 10 years.

(Cont'd)

Hormone is natural product - Part 2 (cont'd)

He estimated that with the hormone average production per cow in the U.S. could be more than 20,000 pounds of milk by the year 2,000, compared to around 16,000 pounds without it. Mix says, last year's average in the U.S. was about 12,500 pounds per cow. (Genetic improvement and better feeding and management practices account for the difference between 16,000 and 12,500 pounds.)

The specialist says the hormone will result in 51 per cent fewer dairy farms by the year 2,000, a 30 per cent decrease in the number of dairy cattle and an increase in the average dairy herd size to 88 animals.

He says only the most efficient dairy farmers will survive the technological revolution and farm milk prices are likely to drop because of lower production costs.

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Contact: Brian Rhiness
352-1223

March 2, 1987
For immediate release

Conference offers something for everyone

A spring agricultural conference in Banff is geared to offer something for all farmers and ranchers, says the co-ordinator of the event.

Anita Lunden, who is helping organize the annual Managing Agricultural Technology For Profit Conference, says speakers have been lined up to address not only production aspects but, also the human side of agriculture.

The conference will run March 29 to April 1 at the Banff Centre. Farm couples interested in attending are urged to register now. Registration forms are available from any Alberta Agriculture district office.

Speakers attending the conference include some Alberta producers who will share their experiences with conference delegates along with provincial, national and international specialists.

Some farm managers may find the alternative they are looking for in a production planning session such as, What's First To Go - Assessing Your Inputs. Murray McLelland and Phil Thomas, from the field crops branch of Alberta Agriculture in Lacombe, will be reviewing current information on barley and canola production.

McLelland will emphasize the non-cash inputs that are often overlooked while Thomas will be rating the various inputs to help producers decide which ones have the least effect on quality and yield and can be the first to go.

Murray Green, also with Alberta Agriculture, will be presenting production alternatives in his session, Tillage and Water Conservation.

Leasing is becoming more important as an alternative means of acquiring the resources necessary for production. In his session, Leasing - Is It More Than A Handshake, Cal Brandley, a lawyer with Alberta Agriculture, will discuss types of lease agreements as they apply to land and equipment.

(Cont'd)

Conference offers something for everyone (cont'd)

Three Alberta farmers will also be talking about alternatives that have proven successful in their operations. Ron Svanes, a farmer from Carmangay, will talk about saline control. His farm is featured in Alberta Agriculture's film, "Salt Woes". Larry Steeves, from Meeting Creek, will present the results of his Farming for the Future project on rotational grazing. Gordon Sherman, from Cardston, will describe how game farming has proven to be a profitable alternative for him. (His farm is home to buffalo, reindeer, elk, and big horn sheep.)

Cutting production costs and finding new products are two approaches to the cost/price squeeze. Another approach is to try to get better prices for what is being produced. In his session on marketing clubs, Chris Carlson, an extension agent from Nebraska, will explain how this type of co-operative effort has enabled producers in his area to consistently sell in the top one-third of farm prices and to increase their net income by $25,000.

Lynn Malmberg, a farmer, grain analyst and columnist in Grainews, will be presenting his analysis of the market situation.

"In addition to a knowledge of alternatives, a successful manager needs to be able to evaluate his choices and decide which one is best for his operation and a particular time," says Lunden. "This requires a thorough knowledge of the operation itself as well as knowledge of conditions in the agricultural sector and the economy as a whole. Farm economists like Garry Bradshaw and Merle Good will present a session on how to use farm records to assess an operation and plan for the future."

Other speakers such as Ron Crowe and John Oliver will be interpreting current conditions in the context of historical and global trends. Bryan Parker, a communications consultant, will challenge farmers to look at themselves as others see them.

The conference sessions not only provide alternatives of the weed, breed and yield type, but also present innovative approaches to the people side of farming.

(Cont'd)

Conference offers something for everyone (cont'd)

Don Shaw, an educator from Lakewood, Colorado, will present some new approaches to parenting. Roger Williams, from the University of Wisconsin, will talk about developing better communication skills as a means of improving relationships within the family and the rural community.

Jolene Brown, a human resource consultant from Iowa who includes among her talents the ability to show a Belgian draft horse, inseminate a cow and hypnotize a chicken, will discuss changing roles on the farm family and how to keep a good self image even when, "normal doesn't live here anymore."

"The conference usually fills up completely and anyone interested in registering should do so now", says Lunden. "Registration forms are available from district extension offices of Alberta Agriculture, Alberta Wheat Pool elevators, and the farm business management branch in Olds.

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Contact: Anita Lunden
(403) 556-4276

March 2, 1987
For immediate release

Vibriosis can still be a threat

Alberta cattlemen should still be concerned about vibriosis, a bacterial disease which can significantly harm their calf crop.

A specialist with Alberta Agriculture says while cases are not as common today as they were 20 years ago, the venereal disease which causes temporary infertility and abortions in cattle, can still be a problem.

Dr. Norman Harries, head of the regional veterinary laboratory in Lethbridge, says he believes recently reported problems in some herds can be blamed on vibriosis, and cattlemen, especially those in southern Alberta should be alert.

If farmers are finding too many open cows when animals are pregnancy tested or if aborted fetuses are discovered vibriosis may be the cause.

It can be a difficult disease to diagnose, but vaccination is the best solution if vibriosis is suspected, says Harries.

"Vibriosis, which has been renamed campylobacteriosis, is a genital disease that causes temporary infertility and abortions in cattle," he says "When introduced into a susceptible herd, it can cause considerable economic loss."

The infection is introduced by the act of breeding. It can be introduced into a clean herd through the addition of an infected cow or bull. A clean bull servicing an infected cow can become infected and transmit the infection to other females in the herd, says Harries. The disease appears to be more common in southern Alberta where large numbers of cattle are maintained on range and in the foothills. Poor fences can allow bulls to carry infection from one herd to another.

"The major problem caused by vibriosis is temporary infertility but occasional abortions can occur in the last third of pregnancy," says the specialist. "The first indication of infection may be the return to heat of cows thought to be pregnant.

(Cont'd)

Vibrioris can still be a threat (cont'd)

"Some cows infected early in the breeding season develop immunity in time to conceive late in the breeding season, but this is unlikely if exposure to a bull is limited to 45 days, a practice which is becoming more common.

"Pregnancy examinations should be performed in the fall on herds which might have contracted the disease."

Harries says if a higher than normal percentage of open cows or late calvers is found, a producer shouldn't waste time finding out what's wrong. Laboratory diagnosis is difficult to obtain later in the year because cows rid themselves of infection as winter approaches.

Aborted fetuses however, carry the infection and, if found, should be submitted to a veterinary laboratory for examination.

Bulls infected with vibriosis usually show no sign of the infection, and libido (sexual interest and performance) and semen quality do not suffer. Unlike cows that may shed the disease in a couple months, bulls can remain infected for two years or more.

The department veterinarian suggests three measures cattleman should follow to protect herds from vibriosis:

1) They should try to ensure that new breeding stock is not infected. Bulls or breeding females, unless virgin, could be infected. It is important to buy from reliable sources, such as herds which are vaccinated regularly against vibriosis.

2) Boundary fences should be secure especially if neighboring cattle have a history of infertility.

3) Vaccines, which afford good protection to females and some protection to bulls, are available. Because it is often difficult to obtain a laboratory diagnosis of vibriosis, owners of herds with breeding problems that might be caused by vibriosis should vaccinate their herds.

Females should be initially vaccinated one to two months before breeding season. Bulls should be given one dose of vaccine two months before the start of breeding followed by a second injection in one month's time. Annual revaccination is recommended. Since several vibrio vaccines are available, cattlemen are advised to discuss details of vaccination with their local practicing veterinarian.

(Cont'd)

Vibriosis can still be a threat (cont'd)

The specialist says not all infertility problems can be blamed on vibriosis.

"Infertility in beef cattle has been of concern to ranchers located adjacent to the Montana border," says Harries. "Vibriosis is believed to be the main problem, however a similar disease called trichomoniasis (trich) which can be confused with vibriosis, is known to be present in northern Montana.

"This condition is caused by the parasite Trichomonas and, as with vibriosis, temporary infertility is the main problem. Cattlemen who run cattle close to the border should be aware of both diseases."

He says producers should ensure their fences are sound, they should buy breeding stock with care and they should seriously consider vibrio vaccination.

If these producers find that infertility is not responding to vibrio vaccination they should suspect trichomoniasis. Unfortunately no trichomonas vaccine is available.

The department specialist notes that aside from disease, in times of drought when grass is scarce, nutritional deficiencies can cause infertility that virtually mimics that of vibriosis and trichomoniasis.

For further informaton on vibriosis contact your local veterinarian or Dr. Harries at the Lethbridge lab at 381-5190.

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Contact: Dr. Norman Harries
381-5190

March 2, 1987
For immediate release

Alberta companies share $1.8 million

Eighteen Alberta companies will share nearly $1.8 million in assistance from a federal/provincial program, to be used to help build or expand their food handling, manufacturing and retail operations.

The recent announcement made under the Canada-Alberta Agricultural Processing and Marketing Agreement will provide $1,794,552 to companies that range from a bean plant in Bow Island, and a candy factory in Innisfail to a feedmill in Barrhead.

The assistance money will become part of about $8.5 million being invested by the 18 companies in capital projects. The completed projects are expected to create more than 100 jobs.

The funding was announced by Bernard Valcourt, federal minister of state (small businesses and tourism) and by Peter Elzinga, Alberta's minister of agriculture.

Following is list of those companies receiving assistance:

Southern Alberta

Alberta Beef Processors Ltd. in Calgary, will be modernizing and expanding its boxed beef processing facility. The company will receive $86,994 toward the $677,462 project. Five jobs are to be created.

Alberta Wheat Pool will be expanding its Bow Island bean plant. It will receive $92,408 toward the $369,633 project. Six jobs are to be created.

Diamond "S" Produce Ltd. and Hostess Foods of Taber, will be modernizing and expanding their potato processing facility. The companies will receive $81,978 toward a $422,567 project. Two jobs are to be created.

Dunker's Dimples 'N Donuts Ltd. of Airdrie, will be establishing a new donut shoppe in Airdrie. It will receive $9,766 toward a $75,499 project. Six jobs are to be created.

(Cont'd)

Alberta companies share $1.8 million (cont'd)

Lucerne Foods Ltd. of Calgary will be modernizing and expanding its beef processing facility. It will receive $79,055 toward the $822,151 project. Three to five jobs are to be created.

Richardson Foods of Claresholm will be modernizing and expanding its manufacturing plant. It will receive $319,485 toward the $1,277,940 project. Fifteen jobs are to be created. The company manufactures products such as syrups and dessert toppings.

The Coaldale Bakery in Coaldale will be building a new bakery in the community. It will receive $38,695 toward the $178,715 project. Four jobs are to be created.

Central Alberta

Viking Candy Corp. will be establishing a new facility in Innisfail to manufacture licorice and other candies. It will receive $497,466 toward the $1.7 million project. Seventeen jobs are to be created.

Baier's Sausage and Meats Ltd. will modernize and expand its meat processing facility in Red Deer. It will receive $12,125 toward the $50,000 project. One job is to be created.

United Grain Growers Ltd. - United Feeds Pet Foods Division, in Innisfail has accepted $7,700 in assistance to pay for part of a feasibility study of existing pet food lines. The project is expected to cost about $19,250.

Northern Alberta

Alberta Bakery Ltd. in Edmonton will receive assistance for two projects. It will receive $23,551 toward a $157,318 project to modernize and expand its bakery and $30,480 toward a $121,921 project to expand its product line. A total of 15 jobs are to be created.

Champion Feed Service in Barrhead will be updating its feedmill facility. It will receive $15,492 toward the $74,217 project.

(Cont'd)

Alberta companies share $1.8 million (cont'd)

Edmonton Meat Packing Ltd. in Edmonton will be modernizing and expanding its meat processing facility. It will receive $59,252 toward the $460,000 project. Three new jobs are to be created.

European Cheesecake Factory Ltd. in Sherwood Park, is expanding its food processing facility. It will receive $35,355 toward the $176,777 project. Twelve jobs are to be created.

Hygaard Fine Foods Ltd. of Sherwood Park, will be modernizing and expanding its food processing plant. It will receive $7,039 toward the $28,155 project.

I & S Produce Ltd. of Edmonton will be updating the equipment in its potato processing facility. It will receive $15,270 toward the $105,300 project.

Redwater Meat Packers Ltd. in Redwater will be modernizing and expanding its abattoir. It will receive $6,461 toward the $35,845 project.

Wing's Food of Alberta Ltd. in Edmonton will be expanding its food processing facility. It will receive $375,980 toward the $1,709,000 project. Twenty jobs are to be created.

The Agricultural Processing and Marketing Agreement is jointly administered and equally funded by the federal Department of Regional Industrial Expansion (DRIE) and Alberta Agriculture. This agreement is subsidiary to the Canada/Alberta Economic and Regional Development Agreement.

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Contact: Dr. Jim Wiebe
427-4287

March 2, 1987
For immediate release

Wilson delivered "no news" budget

If the adage "no news is good news" is true then Alberta farmers should be feeling on top of the world after hearing Finance Minister Michael Wilson deliver the 1987 federal budget in late February.

Two farm management specialists with Alberta Agriculture's farm business management branch in Olds, say Wilson's statement held no surprises for producers, although some tax changes are yet to come.

"On one hand silence is indeed golden as there were no changes to the $500,000 capital gains exemption and the alternative minimum tax," says Harry Warne, supervisor of financial management with the branch. "But on the other hand, a little stronger commitment by the federal government for problems facing the agriculture industry in the upcoming crop year would have been comforting."

"Specifically, this budget contained few changes in the Income Tax Act," adds Merle Good, farm tax management specialist. "Furthermore it did not provide any insight into the proposed changes that will take place under the government's tax reform package.

"The target date for public release on tax reform has been stated to be some time in May. We hope that taxpayers will be given the opportunity to review the proposed changes before implementation by our government and thus allow some pre-tax and estate planning."

The two specialists have gone through the budget to pick out references to agriculture, which should be of interest to the farm community.

(Cont'd)

1. NO CHANGE TO THE $500,000 CAPITAL GAINS EXEMPTION OR THE ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX.

"As we hurriedly flipped through the budget papers we were relieved to find that no changes were proposed for these two amendments," says Good. "Prior to the budget date some tax advisors were having their clients do an "internal flip", where property was transferred between spouses or to children at fair market value to increase adjusted cost base or V-day value on their land before the $500,000 capital gains exemption was either altered or eliminated."

Even though no changes were announced at this time to the $500,000 capital gains exemption, the specialists say they are strong believers that farmers should analyze their estate plan to determine if they should take advantage of the exemption in the near future.

This effort may eliminate the panic two days before each budget announcement, or release of a potential finance department statement, that could substantially alter tax planning.

2. INVESTMENT INCOME AND TAX IMPLICATIONS

The $1,000 interest income expense deduction was unchanged and a further concession in regards to investment income was created. The budget proposes to amend the interest accrual rules for individuals so that 1988 rather than 1987 will be the first year in which accrued interest will be required to be reported on all debt obligations acquired before 1982.

For the majority of individuals this rule will affect them if they had bought Series C-36 Canada Savings Bonds in 1981, which because of the special phase-in rules were not required to report the interest income until 1987. This amendment allows those individuals to report the accrued interest in 1988 when the bonds mature, rather than in 1987.

(Cont'd)

Wilson delivered "no news" budget (cont'd)

3. GASOLINE TAX

Effective February 19, 1987, the excise tax on gas will be raised by 1¢ per litre. The existing fuel tax rebate for fuel for off-highway use by farmers will however, be increased by 1¢ per litre to offset this increase.

4. SNACK-TAX

"Although much humor was written about the snack tax in the major papers, this inclusion of federal sales tax to snack foods, including potato chips, could create a possible hardship to our producers of potatoes in Alberta," says Warne. "Furthermore, it could have a bearing on our sugar beet industry which of course produces sugar for snack foods.

"There is however no increase in the excise tax on alcohol. Was this because Michael Wilson realized that the West needed their alcohol to face this year's economic climate while the East needed their alcohol to face this year's winter weather? This would be in contrast to comments made by other budget observers...perhaps Michael Wilson did look after regional tribulations."

5. TAX REFORM

Good says the only area that Michael Wilson specifically talked about under his tax reform package in this budget, was the fact that they are going to look at more use of tax credits rather than tax exemptions. This has already been started in the form of a Child Tax Credit and the Refundable Sales Tax Credit.

"It is very likely that in the next budget or in the May tax reform releases we will see extensive use of tax credits based on levels of income, rather than flat tax exemptions," he says.

(Cont'd)

Wilson delivers "no news" budget (cont'd)

Good says he expects the tax reform package in May will introduce certain measures that will be of vital interest to farmers. These measures include:

a) the Business Transfer Tax (BTT)

b) amendments to the corporate tax structure as to a reduction of rates

c) tax exemptions being phased out in favor of tax credits

d) a reduction of so called tax preferences which may include changes to the $500,000 capital gains exemption and the alternative minimum tax.

6. CARRY FORWARD OF PREVIOUS BUDGET CHANGES

Although little changes in the Income Tax Act were contained in this budget, previous budget amendments that are effective January 1, 1987 include:

a) the reduction of the investment tax credit from 10% in northern Alberta to 7%, and from 7% in southern Alberta to 5%.

b) individual surtaxes will remain at a flat 3%, regardless of income earned

c) child exemption allowance will be reduced from $710 to $560 when claiming a child but the child tax credit has increased from $454 to $489.

d) the current corporate tax rate will drop by 1% as of July 1.

"Although this budget contained very few amendments or changes that will affect farmers in 1987, we as individual farmers and our farm organizations should be concerned about the May tax reform package," says Good. "We need to ensure that both we and our federal elected officials understand the impact on agriculture of any tax reforms and thoroughly review these measures before they are implemented

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Contact: Merle Good 556-4237
Harry Warne 556-4244

March 2, 1987
For immediate release

Agri-News Briefs

QUACKGRASS ON THE AGENDA

Farmers, researchers and weed specialists are invited to the National Quackgrass Workshop in Winnipeg, March 10 and 11 to learn about the latest advances in controlling the costly weed. The Quackgrass Action Committee is sponsoring the workshop to review the current status of quackgrass research and extension in Canada. Small grain, forage and horticulture producers from across Canada will be on hand to discuss their quackgrass concerns and problems. Committee spokesman, JoAnne Buth says quackgrass is probably underestimated as a weed problem. Annual Canadian crop losses due to the weed have been estimated at about $200 million. Not included in that figure, however, is the damage the weed causes forage seed producers, who have had entire fields rendered useless because of quackgrass infestation. For more information on the workshop contact Buth at (204) 943-7481.

SPEAKER TACKLES ANIMAL WELFARE

A prominent veterinarian and researcher from the United Kingdom will be speaking at the University of Alberta, March 12 on issues involving animal welfare and humane farming practices. Dr. A.J.F. Webster, head of the department of animal husbandry at the University of Bristol will give a talk on "Meat and Rights - Farming as if the Animal Mattered". Webster is internationally known for his research work and reviews on the effects of disease and environmental stress on livestock. He is actively involved in animal welfare issues and humane animal practices in the United Kingdom. He will deliver his free lecture at 4 p.m. in Lecture Room 1 of the Humanities Centre on the U of A campus. Some parking is available after 3:30 p.m. in "U" Zone. For more information contact Dr. Bruce Young at 432-3233.

(Cont'd)

STRETCHING ALBERTA'S FOOD

While homemakers try to stretch the food dollar, Alberta Tourism has come up with some figures on how far the food will stretch. According to statistics recently released by Tourism Minister LeRoy Fjordbotten, Alberta restaurant receipts in 1985 were estimated at $1,185,591. If an average hamburger cost $2, an average hot dog $1.50 and a 12-inch pizza cost $10, then 592,796 hamburgers or 790,394 hot dogs or 118,559 could have been purchased. Hamburgers would cover 80,620 square feet or 1.25 football fields. Hot dogs would cover 80,620 square feet or 0.6 of a football field and pizzas would cover an area of 93,152 square feet or 1.45 football fields.

NEW INFORMATION ON PHOSPHOROUS FERTILIZER

Farmers looking for the latest advice on the need for and method of applying phosphorous fertilizer should obtain a copy of a newly revised Alberta Agriculture publication. "Phosphorous Fertilizer Application in Crop Production", (Agdex 542-3) has just been printed says Ross McKenzie, soil fertility specialist with the department in Lethbridge. The publication reviews the need for phosphorous, type of fertilizers available, methods of application and fertilizer recommendations. Copies of the publication are available from Alberta Agriculture district offices, or by contacting the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

RECOMMENDATIONS MADE FOR IRRIGATED CROPS

Alberta Agriculture has just released a new publication of value to farmers producing crops under irrigation. The "Irrigated Crop Recommendations for Alberta 1987-88" (Agdex 100/32-1) is a producers guide to information on crop production under irrigation. Prepared by Blair Roth, special crops specialist, Blair Shaw, regional crop production specialist and Ross McKenzie, soil fertility specialist, all with Alberta Agriculture in Lethbridge, the publication lists the crop and varieties available, expected yield, seeding rates, fertilizer recommendations and irrigation requirements. Copies of the publication are available from Alberta Agriculture district offices or the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

(Cont'd)

SOIL CONSERVATION WEEK IN APRIL

A campaign is being launched in the next few weeks to raise public awareness of the importance of soil conservation. Alberta Agriculture will be joining other organizations from across the country in support and promotion of National Soil Conservation Week, April 13 to 17, says John Hermans, a soil conservation specialist with the department in Edmonton. "It is important that the public is aware of the need to conserve our soil," says Hermans. "It may not seem that important to the average consumer, but it is everybody's business. As an example, if soil quality deteriorates, crop production costs increase and so will the cost of food." Hermans says the time is now for a renewed emphasis on proper soil management. As part of the week there will be a media campaign, displays, seminars, and information on soil conservation brought to Alberta classrooms.

MEAT TAKES SMALL BITE OUT OF BUDGET

For every dollar spent on food, Canadians spend about 24 cents on beef, veal, lamb, pork and processed meats, says the Canadian Meat Council. Only three per cent of disposable income is spent on meat they say. Canadians buy about 10 million pounds of meat products a day from the 45,000 retail food stores from coast to coast.

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AGRI-NEWS

March 9, 1987

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
MAR 25 1987

For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

March 9, 1987

For immediate release

Alberta Agriculture backs poultry research

Alberta Agriculture Minister, Peter Elzinga, has announced the signing of an agreement with the University of Alberta that will see the Alberta government provide the university with financial assistance for the funding of poultry research.

Under the agreement, up to $185,000 will be provided to the university annually until March 31, 1990. The funds will be used to support the employment of academic and professional staff engaged in poultry research and teaching, the purchase of supplies and other costs.

Also under the agreement, a new poultry research committee is to be established and will include representatives of the poultry industry, the university and Alberta Agriculture. The committee will monitor the research conducted by the university, recommend research priorities and encourage the timely communication of results.

In making the announcement, Mr. Elzinga stated, "The government of Alberta recognizes that the poultry industry has a significant role to play in our efforts to diversify Alberta's agricultural economy. This process will involve both expansion in primary poultry production and increased emphasis on poultry processing."

(Cont'd)

"I am confident," Mr. Elzinga continued, "that the financial assistance the government is providing will, along with additional support from the industry, encourage research into both production and processing and allow the University of Alberta to enhance its already excellent reputation as a leader in poultry research."

The poultry research agreement signed with the university is part of the government's commitment to support research as a means of ensuring the future productivity and profitability of the province's agriculture industry.

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Contact: Jim Armet
Executive Assistant to the
Minister of Agriculture
Edmonton
427-2137

C.W. Herbert
Head, Poultry Branch
Alberta Agriculture
Edmonton
427-5090

March 9, 1987
For immediate release

Special crops given new emphasis

Alberta Agriculture Minister, Peter Elzinga, has unveiled a policy which gives new emphasis to the research and development of special crops in the province.

Along with declaring support for special crops, the mandate also calls for renaming one of the department's oldest research facilities and redirects manpower to the special crops program.

Mr. Elzinga stated "Special crops in themselves aren't new to Alberta, but the Special Crops Mandate and Strategy statement puts into writing the importance the department places on special crops and sets the course for future work.

"It is significant in confirming the direction the department is taking," he says. "We have been following a path of special crop research and development for several years. Now this mandate formalizes that direction and places new emphasis on special crops work."

The mandate has been under development for several years. Its recent approval comes at a time of increased interest by producers in special or alternate crops.

The minister indicated, "With low cereal and oilseed prices, more and more producers are looking for alternatives. The mandate hasn't been developed for that reason, but it is timely. Probably when prices rise again we will lose some of those who are now getting involved in special crops, but hopefully there will be many who will take it seriously. Alternative crops fit well into crop rotation and market diversification programs."

There is no sharp definition of what constitutes a special crop, but in general terms special crops are crops that are not traditional grains and oilseeds or horticultural crops.

There are about two dozen species included in the special crops category. The more common ones include pulse crops such as dry beans, field peas, fababeans and lentils as well as corn, sunflower and safflower.

(Cont'd)

Special crops given new emphasis (cont'd)

In total about 300,000 acres of Alberta farm land will be planted in special crops this year. According to 1985 statistics special crops in Alberta were valued at more than $36 million.

The department first recognized the value of alternate crops in 1959 with the appointment of the first special crops supervisor at what was then known as the Provincial Horticultural Station at Brooks. Over the years special crops specialists have been added at the field crops branch in Lacombe and at field services offices in Lethbridge and Barrhead.

The mandate calls for the department to adopt a specific strategy to develop and serve a special crops industry in Alberta.

It includes the renaming of the Alberta Horticultural Research Center at Brooks to become the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center.

The Brooks facility will become the co-ordinating centre for special crop research work across Alberta. Brooks staff will also provide extension and support service to southern Alberta, while the field crops branch in Lacombe will be responsible for extension, development and research activities in central and north-central Alberta. A special crops specialist in Lethbridge will place emphasis on those crops important in southern Alberta.

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Contact: Jim Armet
Executive Assistant to the
Minister of Agriculture
Edmonton
427-2137

Dr. John Wiebe, Director
Plant Industry Division
Alberta Agriculture
Edmonton
427-5431

March 9, 1987
For immediate release

Preconditioned calves pay their way

More Alberta beef producers have discovered that preconditioning calves paid off on sale day, according to figures compiled by Alberta Agriculture.

Figures collected from the major preconditioned calf sales, last fall, indicate producers received an average of about $5 more per hundred pounds for calves registered through the program, than was paid for calves that were not preconditioned.

Brian Harris, supervisor of the Alberta Certified Preconditioned Feeder Program in Red Deer, says buyer demand was strong.

This is the sixth year for the program. It basically involves a farmer following weaning, vaccination and feeding guidelines, under the supervision of a veterinarian, to better prepare his calves for the stress of the sale and the feedlot.

As part of the program, calves are dehorned, castrated and receive their vaccination, warble treatment and eartags, well in advance of being sold. They are weaned at least 45 days before going to auction.

Harris says there is often a double barrel benefit from the program. The calves not only bring a premium price per pound, but usually they weigh more than calves that have not been preconditioned.

"The preconditioned calf sales were strong in the fall," says Harris. "Analysis of major sales would indicate a premium of $4.99 per hundredweight (cwt) for steer calves and $4.91 per cwt for heifers. The premium varied from $7.14 per cwt to $2.85 per cwt depending on location, weight class and quality."

The strongest sales were in Fort Macleod and Provost, where there was a strong demand from local buyers as well as from buyers from eastern Canada, says Harris. Most of the cattle in these sales were premium quality ranch calves. Some of the other sales had mixed lots of assembled calves which did not receive premiums.

(Cont'd)

Precondition calves pay their way (cont'd)

"The premium appeared to be stronger, particularly in central Alberta, for calves over 600 pounds," he says. "In some sales the premium on these heavier calves would be close to $7 per cwt whereas the average premium for the sales was in the $5 per cwt range."

The regular feeder market dropped from $107 per cwt (average price for 500 to 600 pound steer calves at Ponoka) in mid-September to $95 per cwt for similar weight steer calves in mid-November, however, the price for 500 to 600 pound preconditioned calves averaged $106.94 per cwt in December.

Harris says with low feed costs and good gains, most preconditioned calf producers received a good return for their efforts.

"The number of calves going east was down this year as the eastern buyers were unable to compete with strong local demand," he says. It is estimated that 10 per cent of the calves sold in preconditioned calf sales went to Ontario or Quebec, whereas in other years nearly 30 per cent of these calves went east."

Harris says initial reports show the preconditioned calves are doing well in the feedlot, with reduced death loss and fewer animals treated for illness or disease.

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Contact: Brian Harris
340-7610

March 9, 1987
For immediate release

Barley producers get S.M.A.R.T.

Barley producers northwest of Edmonton are urged to get S.M.A.R.T. later this month.

Northwest region growers will be shown how to "Save Money At The Right Time" (S.M.A.R.T.) at a barley production meeting in Mayerthorpe, March 24.

"Because of depressed grain prices, returns from crops are low considering cash inputs," says Bill Chapman, regional crop production specialist with Alberta Agriculture. "To assist farmers, the speakers will discuss the options of changing cash costs and the impact on crop yields. Topics include crop budgets, fertility requirements, herbicide economics, varieties such as malt versus feed and the options of marketing barley or how to feed it to livestock."

Alberta Agriculture and the Western Barley Growers Association are co-sponsoring the meeting which is scheduled from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Legion Hall in Mayerthorpe. The registration fee of $10 covers lunch. Please register by March 20 by calling the Alberta Agriculture district office in Sangudo at 785-2266.

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Contact: Bill Chapman
674-8259

March 9, 1987
For immediate release

No subsidy on U.S. route

While some prairie farmers say they don't want to be held ransom when grain handling facilities are shut down by labor disputes, redirecting shipments through the United States may not be a good solution either.

A federal Grain Transporation Agency official told the Western Barley Growers Association annual meeting in Red Deer the federal freight subsidy would not apply to grain shipped through the U.S.

Peter Thompson, deputy administrator for the Winnipeg-based agency says other costs in handling Canadian grain in the U.S., would probably be competitive, except for the subsidy problem.

The issue was raised by a Strathmore-area barley producer who said using U.S. ports when Canadian facilities are shut down, would act as an incentive to Canadian labor and management to reach a quick contract agreement.

"It would be a good nudge or a push for negotiators," the producer said.

Thompson said, by barge, it would cost between $8 and $13 a ton to ship Canadian grain from Minneapolis to ports in the Gulf of Mexico. He said terminal charges are negotiable and rates fluctuate with demand.

The agency spokesman said the U.S. route appeared to be a viable option to help out Canada's grain handling system during surges, until he discovered the federal freight subsidy would not apply in the U.S.

In dealing with surges in grain shipments, Thompson said he would like to see greater efficiency in grain handling at the Vancouver terminals. He said the Vancouver terminal now handles up to 3,200 to 3,400 rail cars a day. He estimated, with improved efficiency, this could be increased to 4,000 cars a day.

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Contact: Peter Thompson
(204) 949-3212

March 9, 1987
For immediate release

Land rental rates dropping sharply

Early results of an Alberta Agriculture survey indicate 1987 cropland rental rates, in some parts of the province, are dropping dramatically compared to 1986.

"While the expectation had been for a modest decline of 10 to 15 per cent, the economic reality has pressured change in a more significant way," says Garth Nickorick, a farm management economist with the department. "Initial survey results show rates trending down 20 to 35 per cent from their 1986 levels. This drop reflects the declining commodity outlook for the upcoming season."

However, Nickorick says within some local areas rates are unchanged.

"This may be due to excessive optimism, poor planning, greater insight into the future, long range goals, writing off farm losses from non-farm income, or heavy competition."

Crop share agreements in some areas are moving away from the traditional one-third share to one-quarter or one-fifth share to landowner, he says.

The survey also indicates that the negotiation process is taking longer than usual this year. Nickorick says both parties are seriously considering their options before finalizing the price.

"A common situation at the annual negotiation is the reluctance of landlords to lower the rent as indicated by the returns over the cost of production," says the specialist with the farm business management branch in Olds. "They feel that since there may be deficiency payments paid to the renter based on cropped acres, they should receive some of this payment or at least not be compelled to drop the rent as much as requested.

(Cont'd)

Land rental rates dropping sharply (cont'd)

"Renters feel these deficiency payments are needed to maintain overall farm viability and not to wind up in the landlord's pocket. Since there is no guarantee of future payment, a hoped for payout should not be hidden in the price of rent. A separate clause splitting any payout may be included, however. The feeling of many renters is that landowners want to receive producer deficiency payments but contribute nothing to cost of production or risk."

The overall consequences of this year's negotiation will be in the final survey results available in May. It is expected that these preliminary results will be supported when the full survey is completed.

For further information about the survey to date, contact Garth Nickorick, Farm Management Economist, Farm Business Management Branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0.

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Contact: Garth Nickorick
(403) 556-4247

March 9, 1987
For immediate release

Agency watches for phantom efficiency

While it is important that Canada's grain handling system becomes more efficient, it shouldn't happen at the expense of farmers says a spokesmen for the federal Grain Transportation Agency.

Peter Thompson, deputy administrator of the Winnipeg-based authority said while some efficiency measures may save the railroads or the elevators, or the terminals money, they could end up costing the farmer more.

"There are two kinds of efficiencies," he told delegates attending the 10th annual convention of the Western Barley Growers Association in Red Deer. "There are real efficiencies which save money and there are phantom eficiencies which may save one party money, but just transfers the cost to someone else."

Thompson said the Western Grain Transporation Act which, among other things, provides the railways with a $700 million subsidy to move grain across the country, doesn't necessarily encourage overall efficiency.

"In general terms the act puts the railways on a cost-plus system. They don't have to be as efficient as possible because it's not coming out of their hides.

"It is up to the producer to be as efficient as possible and to make sure dollars are saved through an efficient grain handling system."

The deputy administrator said with increased demand on grain handling facilities the agency has two options to consider. Either there has to be greater efficiency in handling grain or the facilities have to be expanded. He said several studies are being conducted to help in planning.

Thompson said the agency often acts as referee or an umpire for the players involved in the grain handling system. He said the agency tries to ensure the action of one player doesn't hurt another.

(Cont'd)

Agency watches for phantom efficiency (cont'd)

"In sports, the umpire receives complaints for three reasons. First, the player may simply disagree with the call, or secondly he may not know the rules, or thirdly he may be trying to cover up for a mistake. In our work we find the biggest share of complaints fall into the second and third categories."

The agency spokesman said with increased pressure to get crops to terminals, they receive more complaints from all corners of the system including elevators, dealers, railways, shippers and terminal operators.

"There are arguments and everyone believes he is right," said Thompson.

He said the federal agency looks at efficiency proposals to make sure they do provide a benefit. As an example he said railways sometimes want to shut down a branch line felt too expensive to operate. The move may save the railway money, but it ends up creating additional trucking costs for the farmer.

On another point he said the system strives for faster turnaround time for trains delivering grain to terminals.

On one hand faster turnarounds may mean there is no need to buy more hopper cars, which is a savings to producers. On the other hand getting trains unloaded faster may increase the cost to the elevator which has to pay extra operating costs and overtime.

"No doubt there are costly branch lines that should be closed and sometimes overtime costs are justified to keep the system moving," said Thompson. "But we have to be sure that we are dealing with real efficiencies."

The spokesman said because the producer has to foot the bill when costs increase, he is entitled to receive any cost savings derived from efficiencies.

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Contact: Peter Thompson
(204) 949-3212

March 9, 1987
For immediate release

Production changes affect markets

Eliminating the peaks and valleys in barley production will help officals who are trying to establish long term export markets says a spokesman for the Canadian Wheat Board.

Bill Smith, who has been a commissioner with the wheat board for four years told delegates at the Western Barley Growers Association annual meeting, production fluctuations make it hard to plan. He said the continuing use of contracts is one way to assist market development.

Smith told the Red Deer meeting there is little room in domestic markets to absorb production increases. He says it falls on export markets to pick up the slack.

The Vegreville native said about half of the barley produced in Canada goes for domestic use such as livestock feed. And that rate of consumption isn't expected to change.

The other half of production must be moved through export markets. Smith said with annual yields ranging from nine to 13 million tonnes, it's the export market that has to try and move the production increases.

"It makes it hard to plan," he said. "If we are going to establish export markets those customers need to know they aren't going to run short. Feedlots, whether it is in the U.S.S.R. or one of 20 other countries we deal with, need a steady supply of grain. We must ensure a security of supply. It isn't necessarily a matter of expanding our markets, but simply looking after the customers we already have."

Smith said the contract system now used by the wheat board is satisfactory in the short term, but changes are needed for a long term program.

He said world demand is expected to increase in the long term although Canadian producers can expect competition from the U.S. and the European Economic Community as they try to reduce their barley inventories.

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Contact: Bill Smith
(204) 949-3416

March 9, 1987
For immediate release

Don't underestimate value of germination test

Farmers should be thinking about getting a germination test performed on their 1987 seed supply before they plant anything in the ground, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

Because of the poor harvest conditions last fall and dormancy problems this winter, Bill Witbeck with the field crops branch in Lacombe, says producers shouldn't take any chances with seed stock.

Witbeck, supervisor of seed technology, recommends sending seed samples to one of the accredited seed testing laboratories in the province. He says home germination tests can be performed, but a professional test provides that extra peace of mind.

"I know a producer can be 10 and 20 dollared to death, but I think for the cost involved in having an official germination test performed, it is worth it," he says. "For the sake of those few dollars someone might be taking a chance on whether he is going to have a crop or not."

Witbeck says reports do not indicate there is a general problem of poor germination rates among seed stocks harvested in 1986. He says seed harvested before the rains came last fall is probably better than seed harvested after the rain started.

Canolas and forages do not appear to be experiencing the same problems as the cereals.

He says dormancy, a natural rest period for most cereal grain seeds, also appears to be a factor this year. In some cases it is taking seeds longer to come out of their dormant state. He says most dormancy should be over by the end of March at the latest.

"In general terms the central part of the province, is probably the worst area, but then again one farmer may have a real problem with poor seed germination and a few miles down the road another farmer has better germination rates.

(Cont'd)

Don't underestimate value of germination test (cont'd)

"My advice, is regardless of where you are, to have a germination test performed and know what your seed stock is like. I strongly recommend a professional germination test is best, but if nothing else at least do a good home germination test."

The seed specialist says a professional seed testing lab can distinguish whether seeds are dormant or dead, while a home test cannot. He says in some cases 15 to 20 per cent of seeds may be dormant. This percentage can make a difference in deciding whether seed should be used for planting and on planting rate.

Witbeck says one of the key factors in any seed germination test is to use a representative sample of seed. He says a farmer shouldn't use seed from around the doorway or along the edges of a storage bin. The sample should be collected from the centre of the bin.

"If a producer intends to send a sample to one of the labs, the labs are requesting that a sample (100 to 300 g) be pulled, air dried by a household register at room temperature for one week, and/or they can be placed in an enclosed container in a fridge or freezer for a week. This will aid in breaking dormancy if it is still present. Preferably both methods would be best.

"This same procedure can be used if a producer is adamant about a home germination test. After the drying and/or chilling procedure, the seed samples can be placed on germination blotters to determine germination.

"This process can be done at room temperature, but you should ensure the blotter paper remains damp or wet (not excessive water). After a few days, you should be able to get a fairly accurate assessment on the potential of that seed."

Witbeck says the tests should be done soon so producers can place seed orders if necessary. While he says there appears to be no shortage of seeds, it is best to order early and avoid disappointments or delays.

(Cont'd)

Don't underestimate value of germination test (cont'd)

Germination tests at accredited labs cost between $10 and $18. These labs, which can assign a grade to crops of pedigreed status include, the Agriculture Canada plant products lab, Norwest Labs and United Grain Growers lab all in Edmonton, and the Alberta Wheat Pool lab in Camrose.

For more information on germination tests contact your nearest Alberta Agriculture district office or Witbeck in Lacombe at 782-4641.

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Contact: Bill Witbeck
782-4641

March 9, 1987
For immediate release

Assistance directory updated

Alberta Agriculture has updated one of its reference manuals to make it easier for producers to find out what assistance programs are available.

"Assistance Available for Alberta Farmers", (Agdex 871) is a publication which provides a listing of the various assistance programs available from the provincial and federal government. It lists about 65 programs that offer some form of direct financial or technical assistance to farm producers.

There are also some 28 management related services provided by various agricultural specialists within the province. The first contact for the majority of these services is an Alberta Agriculture district office.

Wanda Johnston of the department's farm business management branch in Olds, says because assistance programs are frequently adjusted to meet changing needs and circumstances, it is essential to contact the agencies administering the programs for up-to-date information.

"This publication will be valuable to keep on file as a reference," she says. "Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy of program information as of January, 1987, but details are subject to change at any time."

Copies of this publication can be obtained from Alberta Agriculture district offices, the farm business management branch, Box 2000, Olds, Alberta, or the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6.

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Contact: Wanda Johnston
556-4240

March 9, 1987
For immediate release

Snowfall better late than never

Although it came late in the season, snowfall at the end of February was a big relief to Alberta farmers, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

Peter Dzikowski, agricultural weather resource specialist with the department in Edmonton, says the snow provided a dual benefit. It covered the bare ground, keeping it from blowing away, and it protected overwintering crops from the cold temperatures at the end of the month.

Average February temperatures were about 7 to 8 C warmer than normal in agricultural areas. Monthly temperatures ranged from a low of 10.7 C at High Level, 7.8 C above normal, to a high of 0.8 C at Lethbridge, 6.2 C above normal. Daily temperature values at Lethbridge went from a high of 18 C early in the month, to a low of 25 C near the end.

Snowfall amounts varied from a low of 2.8 cm at Calgary, only 18 per cent of normal, to a high of 21.5 cm at High Level, 35 per cent above normal, says Dzikowski. Most of central Alberta reported between five and 15 cm of snow, which is about 30 to 70 per cent of normal. The Peace River country got about 15 to 29 cm of snow, which is slightly below or near normal.

"February was the third month in a row with much above-normal temperatures and below-normal precipitation," says the specialist. "But the mild temperatures early in the month changed to more seasonable values by the end.

"Maybe March will be more like winter and provide more snow to protect the crops, keep the soil from blowing and provide some moisture for seeding."

For more information, contact Peter Dzikowski at the conservation and development branch in Edmonton at 422-4385.

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Contact: Peter Dzikowski
422-4385
Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

March 9, 1987
For immediate release

Agri-News Briefs

(Correction: Stretching Alberta's Food, appeared in the March 2 issue of Agri-News, but it has since been discovered that Alberta Tourism figures were misleading. Due to a typographical error the decimal point needed to moved three places to the right. The article is repeated again with the correct numbers).

STRETCHING ALBERTA'S FOOD

While homemakers try to stretch the food dollar, Alberta Tourism has come up with some figures on how far the food will stretch. According to statistics recently released by Tourism Minister LeRoy Fjordbotten, Alberta restaurant receipts in 1985 were estimated at $1,185,591,000. If an average hamburger cost $2, an average hot dog $1.50 and a 12-inch pizza cost $10, then 592,796,000 hamburgers or 790,394,000 hot dogs or 118,559,000 pizzas could have been purchased. Hamburgers would cover 80,620,000 square feet or 1,250 football fields. Hot dogs would cover 38,413,000 square feet or 600 football fields and pizzas would cover an area of 93,152,000 square feet or 1,450 football fields.

CUTWORM PROBLEM SHOWS DECLINE

Cutworms should be less of a problem in southern Alberta this spring than in the last three years, says Dr. J.R. Byers a crop entomologist with the Agriculture Canada research station in Lethbridge. Byers says a cutworm monitoring program carried out by scientists indicates that the population of the pale western cutworm has declined by 30 per cent. This is the first decrease since 1981 and probably is a result of effective use of insecticides and an increase in natural control by parasites, he says. Successful control of cutworms require early detection and prompt treatment with an insecticide says Byers. Any field that shows slow growth or becomes patchy in appearance should be carefully checked.

(Cont'd)

Agri-News Briefs (cont'd)

FERTILIZER REPORT AVAILABLE FOR IRRIGATION FARMERS

Irrigation farmers looking for specific advice to determine what yields they can expect from different levels of nitrogen fertilizer application should obtain a copy of an Alberta Agriculture report. The document "Fertilizer Requirements of Irrigated Grain and Oil Seed Crops in Southern Alberta" will give producers specific information on seven different crops, says Ross McKenzie, a soil fertility specialist in Lethbridge. The report summarizes five years of field work with grain and oil seeds. McKenzie says, as an example, if a soil test recommends adding 50 pounds of nitrogen to the soil the report can show a farmer what yields he can expect with different rates of nitrogen fertilizer. Among the varities covered by the report are soft white spring wheat, hard red spring wheat, Durum wheat, HY-230 wheat, barley, canola and flax. It also contains a summary of crop needs for phosphorous, potassium, sulphur and micro-nutrients. For a copy of the report contact McKenzie in Lethbridge at 381-5126 or Len Krysanowski, a soil specialist in Edmonton at 436-9150.

SALAD BAR MAY NOT BE LOW CALORIE

Replacing a hot meal with a trip to the salad bar may not be the best move for someone trying to cut calories, says a nutritionist with the Canadian Meat Council. Linda Corby says research work shows that both pork and beef are now 30 to 50 per cent leaner than they were a few years ago. The fat content in these red meats was found to be similar to that of poultry and many kinds of fish. In a comparision it was noted that three and half ounces of trimmed sirloin steak or pork loin chop contains less fat than two tablespoons of French dressing on a tossed salad.

AGRI-NEWS

March 16, 1987

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APR - 2 1987

For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

March 16, 1987
For immediate release

Farmers turn attention to special crops

Alberta farmers looking for short term relief will hopefully find long term benefits, as more producers turn to special crops to cushion the blow of low grain prices, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

With about 300,000 acres expected to be planted in alternative crops this year, Bob Park, provincial supervisor of special crops in Lacombe, says the acreages of some varieties will double and triple over 1985.

Park says special crops are not something a producer should jump into one year and drop the next. He says they should start out small and work into a system where the special crop becomes part of the overall crop rotation program.

Special or alternative crops generally are those field crops suited to a standard farm enterprise. They should not be confused with horticultural crops such as fruit, berries and vegetables.

The most common specialities are pulse crops such as peas, lentils, dry beans and faba beans used for human consumption and livestock feeds. Safflower is grown to produce bird seed, while sunflower seeds are used for bird seed and confectionary seed. Corn is grown for livestock feed and liquor distilling.

In north central Alberta wild rice is grown as a special crop and preliminary work has begun to test the potential of fibre flax as a another alternative crop.

Most alternative crops are planted with conventional grain drills and harvested with a conventional combines. Some crops require row crop planters and special combine headers. Depending on the crop variety they can be grown in large or small acreages, under irrigation or on dryland and can be found from southern Alberta to the Peace River region.

"Special crops generally require more management, but they usually offer better returns," says Park. "We have seen good interest lately from producers and further expansion in production is expected.

(Cont'd)

"My advice to farmers is to take a good look down the road and do some serious head scratching before they rush into anything. Alternative crops will afford a greater dollar return, but farmers should go slow.

"They should plant a small acreage to start with and get to know the crop. They should lean on anyone they can for advice and information on how to grow it, and then incorporate it into the overall crop rotation."

Park says many of the special crops are grown under contract and in most cases there is a ready market out there if the supply can be assured.

He says the processing plants or contractors that buy the crops need to know they will have enough production to meet their customers' orders. If they see producers are committed to growing special crops and will guarantee a supply, more markets can be tapped.

"No one wants to develop a local or export market or put money into a processing plant and then find out they can't get the raw material because farmers aren't growing it."

The special crops supervisor says special crops fit well with intensive crop management (ICM) philosophy.

"I would like to see them included in ICM," says Park. "Put into a crop rotation, special crops could help eliminate the need for summer fallow, which is important in this part of the country. Many of the special crops are nitrogen fixers. Some of the annual legumes or pulse crops can be used for plowdown. Many can be used as a break crop."

He says work with special crops has been given a new mandate by Alberta Agriculture which will result in more research to develop new and better growing techniques.

Park says researchers will investigate many agronomic practices such as planting dates, planting rates, crop fertility, weed control, harvest aid and cultivar adaptability for a wide range of growing conditions.

(Cont'd)

Farmers turn attention to specialty crops (cont'd)

Park says anyone wanting more information about alternative crops should contact an Alberta Agriculture's specialist - Ken Lopetinksy, regional forage and special crops specialist in Barrhead at 674-8258; Blair Roth, special crops specialist in Lethbridge, at 381-5127; Dr. Refe Gaudiel, forage and special crops specialist in Brooks at 362-3391 or himself, at the field crops branch in Lacombe, at 782-4641

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Contact: Bob Park
782-4641

March 16, 1987
For immediate release

Special crops no stranger to consumer

Whether it's a lunchtime bowl of pea soup, the handful of sunflower seeds thrown out for the cedar waxwings, or a nip of whisky to cut the ice in your veins, consumers regularly use products generated from Alberta special crops.

Soup, bird seed and alcohol are only three of the products derived from a dozen or more special crops grown on some 300,000 acres in the province.

But the range and amount of products produced is expected to increase in the future as more acres of these higher-management/higher-value crops are brought into production.

Bob Park, supervisor of Alberta Agriculture's special crops program, says although specialty crops are no automatic formula for wealth, the crops continue to be good money makers, because of strong market demand.

In support of the mounting interest in the crops by producers, Alberta Agriculture has also strengthened its mandate for the special crops program.

The Alberta Horticultural Research Center at Brooks has been renamed the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center to reflect its increased role in alternative crop work.

Dr. Refe Gaudiel, a forage and special crops specialist at the centre has been named to co-ordinate the special crops research work in the province.

Park says 1987 estimates show the acreage of some special crops could increase as much as 300 per cent over 1986 levels.

The special crops are grown province-wide, with the variety of crops grown in certain regions limited by moisture, heat and soil conditions.

(Cont'd)

Special crops no stranger to consumer (cont'd)

The most common alternate crop are the species known as pulse crops which includes dry peas, faba beans, lentils and dry beans. Collectively the four crops take up about 150,000 acres.

"We have about 100,000 acres alone in dry peas this year, which represents a three fold increase over 1986," says Park.

While the pulse crops are more commonly used for soups and other food products, Park says there is a growing interest in them as livestock feed.

Peas for example can be crushed or cracked and used as protein supplement for cattle and swine, while research is also being done on faba beans to determine its role as a protein supplement.

Faba beans can also be a high yielding silage crop. With protein levels of between 18 and 20 per cent it is particularly of interest to dairymen who want a high protein feed for their cattle.

The pulse crops which require more moisture, do well under irrigation or higher rainfall areas in the province. About 50,000 acres of pulses are grown in southern Alberta, with most of the remaining 100,000 acres in central Alberta. However the crops are gaining in popularity through to the Peace region.

Park says producers can expect pulse crop yields of about 3,000 pounds an acre for peas, 1,500 pounds per acre for lentils, 4,000 pounds an acre for faba beans and 2,000 pounds per acre for dry beans.

Safflower seed production is expected to double this year to cover about 7,000 acres, says Park. The Alberta variety of the dryland crop doesn't produce enough oil to make it economic for the oilseed industry, but it is popular as bird seed. The Lacombe specialist says the market could support about 10,000 acres of Alberta grown safflower.

Dryland safflower can yield about 1,500 pounds per acre with the seed selling for about 10 cents a pound.

About 5,000 acres of sunflower, again mostly in southern Alberta, will be planted this year. Grown mostly under contract, the seeds are used both for bird seed and confectionary seed.

(Cont'd)

Special crops no stranger to consumers (cont'd)

Because production has steadily increased Alberta Sunflower Seed Ltd. at Bow Island will be expanding its operation this year to include a roaster for confectionary sunflower.

Irrigated sunflowers will yield about 2,500 pounds per acre, while dryland crops will yield about 1,500 pounds per acre.

About 13,000 acres of corn is grown in southern Alberta. Used both for livestock feed and for distilling, it is produced primarily under irrigation although some dryland crops have been tried.

Although it requires a high capital investment in planting, harvesting and drying equipment, Park says there is a strong demand for corn. He says the market is there for 10 times the corn Alberta now produces.

Irrigated corn yields about 100 bushels per acre, while dryland corn yield is estimated at 40 to 50 bushels per acre.

"Generally when growing alternate crops they require more management by the producer," says Park. "But there is also a greater dollar return."

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Contact: Bob Park
782-4641

March 16, 1987
For immediate release

24 crops in special category

According to 1985 statistics special crops were worth about $36 million to Alberta farmers.

That figure is based on 11 special crops grown on about 127,000 acres. In 1987 special crop production is expected to reach 300,000 acres as more producers get involved in these higher management/higher profit crops.

And what are special crops? They are field crops that can be grown under standard farming methods, but do not include horticultural crops such as fruit, berries and vegetables.

A large category of special crops include pulse crops such as dry beans, broad beans, adzuki beans, mung beans, soybeans, chickpeas, field peas, lentils, lathyrus, lupin, vetches and fababeans.

Also included in the special crops category are buckwheats, canary seed, millet, sorghum, sunflower, safflower, spices, essential oils, Jerusalem artichoke and fibre flax.

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Contact: Bob Park
782-4641

March 16, 1987
For immediate release

Dial 4-H to phone 4-H

Anyone trying to call the Alberta 4-H branch in Edmonton needs only to remember two digits - four and two.

Mahlon Weir points out the new Alberta 4-H telephone number

The branch's new telephone number, 422-4444, can be remembered in different ways say 4-H officials. It can be known as 422-HHHH or 422-4H4H.

Mahlon Weir, Alberta Agriculture's provincial 4-H program services supervisor at 4-H headquarters in Edmonton, says he was finally able to have the telephone number added to the branch phone exchange.

"We tried several years ago to get 4444, but that number and our 427 government exchange number were already in use," says Weir. "We will still use our old phone number of 427-2541, but four-two should make it easier for folks to remember."

Callers can reach the 4-H branch toll-free from throughout Alberta by dialing their local Regional Information Telephone Enquiry (RITE) operator and requesting 422-4H4H.

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Contact: Bob Coe
427-2541

March 16, 1987
For immediate release

Land values down in 1986

Although more Alberta farmland traded hands in 1986, the value of those acres dropped nearly eight per cent compared to 1985, says an Alberta Agriculture report.

Figures compiled by Julie Egglestone, a resource economist with the department in Edmonton show that acreage transfers were up 10.5 per cent in 1986, but the value of the agricultural land dropped by 7.6 per cent.

Of the nearly one million acres transferred in 1986 the average value per acre came to $370.51. Just more than 800,000 acres were transferred in 1985 at an average value of $401.04 per acre.

The average value for each quarter last year was down from the corresponding quarter in 1985. The number of acres transferred in three of the four quarters increased from the corresponding quarter in 1985. The second quarter was the exception. It showed a decrease of 10.8 per cent compared to 1985.

The following table shows the details of the 1985 and 1986 land values and transfers:

	1985		1986	
	Acres Transfered	Avg. Value ($/Acre)	Acres Transfered	Avg. Value ($/acre)
1st quarter	191,826	395.25	198,968	378.79
2nd quarter	306,506	419.03	273,519	391.61
3rd quarter	178,366	377.63	189,476	335.02
4th quarter	143,603	399.44	244,629	367.66
Year end totals and averages	820,301	401.04	906,592	370.51

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Contact: Julie Egglestone
427-4026

March 16, 1987
For immediate release

Alberta sheep among fastest growing in the world

Mary may have had a little lamb, but if she'd gone to school in Alberta, chances are it wouldn't have been little for long.

Like high performance sports cars that can go from zero to 60 in four seconds, Alberta lambs are known for leading the field when it comes to putting on the pounds.

On average lambs can go from birth to market weight of about 100 pounds in five months. Alberta lambs are ranked with record holders and are considered among the fastest growing sheep in the world.

This achievement has built provincial sheepmen an international reputation, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist. And it keeps pressure on Alberta breeders to maintain the highest standard of animal genetics.

Playing a major role in this record of achievement is the Alberta Ram Test Station in Olds which marks its 13th year of operation in 1987.

John Knapp, a provincial sheep specialist with the department in Airdrie, says the test station is one proving ground for measuring the performance of Alberta bred sheep.

The station provides that official record and endorsement which separates the real superstars from a field of top performers.

"The Alberta Ram Test Station provides a uniform environment in which breeders can assess the genetic merit of their rams against that of other breeds," says Knapp.

Operated in a cooperative effort between Alberta Agriculture and Olds College, the test station has grown in popularity each year. From the 85 lambs entered on test by 12 breeders in 1975, it has grown to test 238 lambs entered by 28 breeders in 1986.

The male lambs brought to the station represent six major sheep breeds in Alberta. The young rams are given a 14 day warm up period at the station, before starting their growth rate test. Once the eight week test period begins they are all identically fed and cared for in a common environment.

(Cont'd)

Alberta sheep fastest growing in the world (cont'd)

At the end of the test period the average daily gains are calculated and other qualities measured to compare not only how sheep of the same breed performed but how one breed stacks up against another.

"Without the test station there would still be performance testing done at home which would identify those superior animals within a flock, but there would be no way of comparing the average performance with other flocks," says Knapp.

The cream of those ram lambs tested - the ones that score above the station average - are eligible for the annual test station sale which last year drew more than 250 buyers and spectators.

The 51 lambs sold in 1986 drew gross receipts of $21,270, with a near record average price of $416 for ram lambs. The highest priced single ram at the sale was raised by Reg Marler of Sherwood Park and sold to Walt Strand of Lethbridge for $950.

Knapp says the test station is a proven marketing tool for Alberta sheep breeders.

"The average prices for ram lambs at the Alberta test station sale are frequently the highest in Canada," he says. "The test station is a powerful advertising tool, not only for breeders as individuals but as a group as well. They know if their rams do well at the test station, they will have buyers wanting those ram's genetics in their own flocks."

While not every ram grows at a world class rate, the Alberta ram test station did produce the co-holder of the world record for growth. The young ram had an average gain of .736 kilograms or 1.62 pounds a day.

Alberta lambs also set a world record for average daily gain for a group of five lambs from one contributor.

"This type of performance is real testimony to the goals Alberta breeders have achieved in genetic selection," says Knapp.

The specialist says the emphasis to improve weight gain and feed efficiency is necessary. In Canada and Alberta, where feeding costs are a fact of life it is important that lambs reach market weight in as few days as possible.

(Cont'd)

Alberta sheep fastest growing in the world (cont'd)

Reg Marler, of Sherwood Park, left was owner of the top selling 1986 ram, Sherwood 10U, which was bought for $950 by Walt Strand on Lethbridge.

There are about 2,000 people in Alberta who own sheep, says Knapp noting this includes hobby farmers with two or three animals, to full time producers with several hundred ewes.

About half of the lambs in Alberta are grown out to market weight in the feedlot, while the other half are raised on pasture.

Because Alberta producers don't have access to as much grass and are faced with a shorter grazing season than sheep farmers in other countries, more animals are provided with supplements or fed year round at home.

"A grassland economy is different," says Knapp referring to sheep producing countries such as New Zealand, which has pasture available year round. "In Alberta with the high cost of feed concentrates, every extra day of feeding is expensive.

"We also have a longer feeding period in winter than most countries. So there is real economic pressure on Alberta producers to improve growth rate and lambing percentage."

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Contact: John Knapp
948-5101

March 16, 1987
For immediate release

Sheep tested on grassland performance

While records have been kept for about 12 years on how Alberta lambs perform in a feedlot environment, work has just begun to see how well the different breeds of young rams perform on grassland.

A specialist with Alberta Agriculture says the breeds that shine in a controlled feeding situation may not sparkle as brightly when foraging on open pasture.

Provincial sheep specialist John Knapp, of Airdrie, says a pilot test project in 1986 showed some interesting indicators, but not enough animals were tested to draw firm conclusions.

"It appears that terminal sire breeds, (ram lambs which will be used to produce offspring for the slaughter market) do well in a feedlot, but in a preliminary pasture test they performed at an inferior level to maternal breeds," he says. "These maternal breeds, (breeds noted for their mothering abilities such as multiple births, good milk production and hardiness) may be more adapted to a grassland environment."

The grassland testing work, which will be continued in 1987, was done at the Hays sheep pasture in southern Alberta. Hays is just east of Vauxhall and about 40 kilometres north of Taber.

The grassland testing project, like the Alberta Ram Test Station in Olds, is intended to measure how different breeds of ram lambs perform over a 56-day test period. The test measures average daily weight gain and other qualities in sheep. The test station at Olds determines how well lambs do in a controlled feedlot environment, while the Hays test station will measure performance on grassland.

The Alberta Energy and Natural Resources pasture which covers about 11 sections is being developed, over five years, to accommodate up to 30,000 sheep, says Knapp.

A combination of irrigated and dryland pasture, the Hays grazing area has been used for sheep since 1975. It pastured 10,000 head of sheep in 1986 and is expected to carry about 14,000 head this year.

(Cont'd)

Sheep tested on grassland performance (cont'd)

Knapp says the test station work at Hays will be valuable to Alberta sheepmen.

With about half of Alberta lambs now being raised for market on pasture each year, selection of breeding stock that performs well on grassland will be important.

"Sheepmen will be interested in buying rams that have performed well on grass, because the offspring of those rams will probably perform well on grass too," says Knapp. "The Hays test station will be able to identify those animals that are superior in the grassland environment."

The specialist says the Hays pasture development will also help to provide more low cost pasture for Alberta sheepmen and improve profit margins.

The Hays pasture has the largest carrying capacity of the five crown land sheep pastures in the province.

The other four include the Twin River pasture at Milk River, the A7 pasture at Nanton, the Medicine Lake pasture west of Wetaskiwin and the Kleskun Lake pasture near Grande Prairie.

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Contact: John Knapp
948-5101

March 16, 1987
For immediate release

Agricultural software focus at conference

Computer and management experts along with agricultural extension specialists will meet in Calgary in May to discuss what's new and what's needed in the world of computer software for the agricultural industry.

They will all be part of the first-ever Canadian conference on agricultural software development, planned for May 11 - 13 at the Sheraton Cavalier Hotel.

Organized by the farm business management branch of Alberta Agriculture, in co-operation with Olds College and the University of Alberta, the conference is designed to advance the applications of personal computers in agricultural management.

"The conference is aimed primarily at software developers and marketers, but is also targeted at hardware vendors and agricultural extension staff interested in serving the agriculture computer market," says Wilson Loree, head of the farm business management branch and conference chairman. "The conference will create a forum for participants to exchange ideas and experiences, and to gain a better understanding of the agricultural industry. This will enable participants to position themselves for the agricultural software market over the next five years."

Topics to be presented at the conference will range from outlooks on the economic, social and technical climates facing Canadian agriculture in the coming years to computer operating systems environments.

The conference will also include panel discussions on such topics as the role of the private and public sectors in farm computer extension, software development and evaluation.

Speakers include Doug Radke, assistant deputy minister, Alberta Agriculture, Dr. Steve Harsh, professor of agricultural economics at Michigan State University, and Lyle Warrington, past president of the Association of Agricultural Computing Companies (AAAC) in the U.S.

(Cont'd)

Agricultural software focus at conference (cont'd)

Other speakers from both the public and private sector will express their views on the agricultural industry.

Registration forms are available from the farm business management branch in Olds. The registration fee is $80 (includes two meals), payable to Olds College. Completed registration forms may be sent to Olds College, c/o Gladys Critchlow, 556-8359 or 556-8330, Facility Bookings, Olds College, Olds, Alberta, T0M 1P0.

For more information contact J. Wilson Loree, Bruce Waldie or Paul Gervais at the Farm Business Management Branch, Alberta Agriculture, Box 2000, Olds, T0M 1P0, or phone (403) 556-4240.

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Contact: J. Wilson Loree
(403) 556-4240

March 16, 1987
For immediate release

Agri-News Briefs

SEMINAR FOR HOG PRODUCERS

Hog producers interested in learning more about feed additives are invited to a March 25 seminar in northeastern Alberta. The Feed Additive Update seminar will feature several speakers, including some from Kentucky, says Ron Bazylo, regional swine specialist with Alberta Agriculture's regional office in Vermilion. Among the speakers will be representatives of five chemical and drug companies - Phizer, Cyanamid, Tuco, Alltech and Elanco. The seminar, to be held at the St. Vincent parish hall, about 12 miles north of St. Paul, will run from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.. Lunch will be provided and St. Paul district agriculturist Terry Holmgren asks producers to pre-register so catering plans can be finalized. To pre-register or for more information contact the St. Paul district office at 645-6301 or Bazylo at 853-8109.

LAST CALL FOR AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE

Anyone planning to attend an annual agricultural conference in Banff, aimed at helping producers with a wide range of issues, has only a few days left to register. Anita Lunden, co-ordinator of the Managing Agricultural Technology for Profit Conference, says farm couples should call now if they plan to attend the March 29 to April 1 conference at the Banff Centre. Registration forms are available from district extension offices of Alberta Agriculture, Alberta Wheat Pool elevators and from the farm business management branch in Olds. Contact Lunden at 556-4276.

SOIL CONSERVATION WEEK PLANNED

In an attempt to raise public awareness about the importance of soil conservation, National Soil Conservation week will be observed April 13 to 17. Special events and information programs are planned by government departments and other interest groups supporting the third annual week. It is estimated that soil degradation, including erosion and other soil quality problems costs Canadians about $1.275 billion annually.

(Cont'd)

SAFFLOWER RESEARCH CONTINUES

Agriculture Canada specialists at the Lethbridge Research Station are working with an established variety of safflower to try and improve its oil content. The Saffire variety of safflower is grown in southern Alberta, but its low-oil seeds are used for the bird seed industry. Plant breeders at the Lethbridge station are studying two different methods to improve the oil content to meet the requirements of the oilseed industry, says Dr. Hans-Henning Muendel. In one case, different breeder lines of Saffire were screened for oil content and those with highest levels were increased and tested for good agronomic characters in the field. In the second method, various safflower lines with high oil levels were crossed with saffire and their top performing progenies were selected. Meundel says although oil levels are increasing more prairie-wide testing is needed.

COLLEGE READY FOR LITTLE ROYAL

Lakeland College at Vermilion is geared to welcome the public this weekend to its annual "Little Royal" open house. The open house tradition which was started more than 30 years ago was revived in 1986. With a name that is a spin-off from Toronto's Royal Winter Fair, the open house offers the public a look at the latest in agricultural techonology. There will be tours of college facilities along with student displays, special agricultural shows and demonstrations. For more information on the March 20 to 22 open house contact Lakeland College at 853-8528.

DILL PICKLE RACKS UP THE SALT

Health and Welfare Canada says Canadians should watch how much salt they get in their diet. Officials say the average person consumes about 10,000 mg of sodium a day. About 50 per cent of this comes from cereal and dairy products while about 20 per cent comes from meat, poultry, fish and eggs. As an indication of where we get salt, the department says a hot dog bun has about 253 mg of sodium, while a wiener has about 412 mg. A serving of cottage cheese has about 481 mg, while a 250 ml of tomato juice has 512 mg. A serving of mushroom soup has 1,137 mg, while a single dill pickle tops the scale at 4,928 mg.

AL1.69

AGRI-NEWS

CAN/ALTANA
APR - 2 1987

March 23, 1987

For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

March 23, 1987
For immediate release

Soil problems are almost invisible

If a good thing can be said about wind erosion it's that it creates a visual awareness of how vulnerable and fragile the soil resource is.

That doesn't mean erosion should be encouraged, but if it wasn't for the occasional blast of blowing soil the public might be totally unaware of the nearly invisible issue of soil degradation, which costs Albertans millions of dollars a year.

Soil degradation, which is an overall term for erosion and other problems which reduce or eliminate soil productivity, is a serious matter, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist. Recent studies suggest that soil degradation costs Albertans an estimated $429 million a year.

But, John Hermans, head of the department's soil conservation section in Edmonton says, it is not too late to do something about it.

"If we are going to continue farming in Alberta we must accept that we have a responsibility of keeping the soil productive," he says.

"We may not all be farmers, but we all like to eat. One of the benefits of having productive soil is to have relatively affordable food. As the natural productivity of the soil decreases, the costs of fertilizers and other inputs increase. The higher input costs will be reflected in higher food prices.

Hermans says National Soil Conservation Week, April 13 to 17 is an opportunity to raise public awareness of the importance of protecting the soil.

"It's a serious problem and people should be concerned about it," he says. "But they should also realize it's a problem we can do something about. There are solutions.

"It is not just up to the farmers and soil specialists to do something. It is important that everyone understands the problem and supports programs and measures that are implemented to conserve and maintain the soil resource."

(Cont'd)

Soil problems are almost invisible (cont'd)

Hermans says the entire problem can't be blamed on poor farming practices. He says drought conditions, insect infestations and economic pressures on producers all contribute to the dilemma.

"Our main tool in reversing the problem is to keep reinforcing the message of conservation farming," he says. "It is important that producers employ tillage and harvesting methods which minimize the risk of soil loss and work toward improving soil quality.

"At the same time we have to continue with research and development of technology that will help eliminate or prevent soil degradation problems."

Hermans says there are no cheap and quick solutions to replace the volume and quality of soil that's been lost. One study showed that it could cost $85,000 a hectare to replace the nutrients lost through wind erosion. Other research says even it we had the money, it takes 25 years of very intensive management to replace one inch of top soil.

"The effort that we make now is really not for our benefit, it is for future generations," he says. "But now is the time to start paying attention. The problem is serious, but it's not a crisis. If we apply soil conservation methods now we can stop the problem from getting worse and begin the restoration process."

Hermans stresses that for improvements to come about soil conservation methods must be cost effective for the producer. He says farmers do not have an unlimited cash flow, especially in times when many commodity prices are low.

The specialist says soil protection measures must be feasible and producers must be shown that conservation can pay.

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Contact: John Hermans
422-4385

March 23, 1987
For immediate release

No early turnaround for agriculture markets

There wasn't much good news at a recent provincial conference on the future of agriculture, but at least it put problems facing farmers into perspective.

The Accent '87 - Taking Stock Conference in Edmonton layed it all out for about 200 producers, economists and market analysts, confirming the message that, in most cases, the world is overstocked with agricultural products.

The eighth annual conference sponsored by Alberta Agriculture made it clear there are no easy solutions to current and expected market problems.

Experts and specialists, reviewing different commodities, blamed international overproduction, trade wars and government intervention as the key factors affecting agricultural markets.

They said low prices, which will eventually force production cutbacks, and/or major crop failures, will determine when markets will improve.

Wheat and feed grain markets will continue to be down for some years and oilseeds are also facing depressed prices because of oversupply.

Although things have been good for the livestock industry, conditions are expected to start changing for hog producers and cattlemen within the next couple years, as oversupply and a consumer preference for poultry take effect.

Alternate crops such as forage seeds and pulses like beans, peas and lentils are about the brightest spot in the production picture. Demand for these commodities is expected to remain high.

(Cont'd)

No early turnaround for agriculture markets (cont'd)

Although the national and international specialists agreed that hope in itself will not pay the bills, they urged producers to hang in and strive for efficiency in production, be aware of new technology and hone their marketing skills to make the best of a bad situation.

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Contact: David Walker
427-7132

March 23, 1987
For immediate release

Canada's carrying big oilseed inventory

While there has been a 15 per cent increase in the use of canola this year, Canadian farmers are still holding a large inventory that is expected to keep prices down through 1988, says a market specialist.

Peter Lloyd, director of marketing for XCAN Grain Ltd. says the crop year that ended in July added another half million tonnes to the oilseed inventory or carryout, for a total of 1.46 million tonnes in storage.

He told a recent Edmonton conference that inventory could increase to about two million tonnes by the end of the next crop year in July 1988.

"Under this scenario, producers should expect restricted delivery opportunities or lower prices or both," he said.

Lloyd told the Accent '87 - Taking Stock Conference, although there are bright spots in the canola or rapeseed industry, oversupply and the trade policies of other producing countries, have a significant impact on what happens in Canada.

"Canada is a small player in the world market and we are price-takers who must accept the prices resultant from international political and economic competition for markets," he said. "Currently Canadian producers are being seriously impacted by the lower commodity prices for both cereals and oilseeds that result from government programs in many producing and importing countries."

Total use, or in marketing terms, disappearance, of canola has increased from 1.6 million tonnes in 1977/78 to three million tonnes in 1986/87.

While total domestic crush has shown a steady increase, the exports of rapeseed have been eratic, said Lloyd.

Export markets to Japan and Mexico are improving each year, but heavily subsidized European rapeseed can easily displace Canadian sales in these two countries.

EXCAN is projecting exports this year at 1.67 million tonnes, a domestic crush of 1.35 million tonnes and a carryout of 1.46 million tonnes.

(Cont'd)

Canada's carrying a big oilseed inventory (cont'd)

Lloyd said the company is predicting a two per cent increase in commercial "disappearance" in 1988, but this would not help to reduce the inventory.

Commenting on flaxseed he said the picture is much the same.

"Despite the project seven per cent increase in total disappearnce, the estimated carryout at July 31, 1988 will exceed the total annual commercial disappearance by some 80,000 tonnes," he said. "In these circumstances, prices are expected to remain under pressure and producers growing flaxseed should be prepared to store a significant proportion of their crop."

The marketing specialist said the oilseed industry should push for four main objectives:

1. equal federal protection of the oilseed grower in the trade wars; 2. continued and greater use of canola oil in food aid; 3. stronger efforts to penetrate additional markets for seed, oil and meal; and 4. reduction of trade impediments imposed by other countries.

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Contact: David Walker
427-7132

March 23, 1987
For immediate release

New players in wheat production picture

Overproduction and international tradewars will continue to play havoc with wheat and feedgrain prices into the 1990s, says a Canadian Wheat Board spokesman.

While world demand for grains is expected to increase as the population grows, so will production.

But there are new kids on the block who will be meeting consumption demands, says Dr. Brian Oleson, executive director of the Canadian Wheat Board.

He told the recent Accent '87 - Taking Stock Conference in Edmonton there will be no quick recovery in grain markets.

Oleson told 200 producers and industry specialists attending the eighth annual Alberta Agriculture conference that production by the five major wheat exporting countries (which includes Canada) is expected to be down by about 15 million tonnes over the next five years.

Quoting from a major study prepared by a British economist, Oleson said world wheat consumption is expected to increase by about 49 million tonnes between 1985 and 1991. About 46 million of those tonnes will come from countries other than the five major exporters.

In 1985 the world consumed 499 million tonnes of wheat. It is expected to use about 548 million tonnes in 1991.

Production from the "big five", - the U.S., Canada, European Economic Community, Argentina and Australia - was set at 194.5 million tonnes of wheat in 1985. Production by 1991 is forecast at 179.2 million tonnes.

While Canadian production is expected to be down about half a million tonnes, the biggest cutbacks will be made by the U.S. and the EEC, the report said.

Asian and African countries will be among those increasing production to meet world consumption demands. The increase in production (in million tonnes) is expected in China (17), India (8), USSR (8), Brazil (3), Africa (3.5), West Asia (3) and Pakistan (2).

(Cont'd)

On the trade side Oleson says the report forecasts cutbacks as well.

"Wheat trade is determined in the report as the difference between production and utilization in the importing countries," he said. "The 1984-86 average level of trade was 95.5 million tonnes.

"The main changes expected are that USSR wheat imports would drop from 22 to 11 million tonnes while those of the EEC, Eastern Europe and Brazil would drop one million tonnes."

Although Egypt and West Asia are expected to import more wheat, the net effect is that world wheat trade is expected to drop to 85 million tonnes by 1991.

"The report concludes that a large overcapacity for wheat production in major exporting countries will likely continue through 1991 and that the prospects for price recovery due to a tighter supply demand balance are minimal," said Oleson.

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Contact: David Walker
427-7132

March 23, 1987 9

For immediate release

Plenty of guess work in price forecasts

Canadian wheat prices are expected to be about $3.10 a bushel this year, although the Canadian specialist who made the prediction says a lot of things could change.

Dr. Gary Storey, a professor of agricultural economics at the University of Saskatchewan says there is a 70 per cent probability that the farm price for wheat (excluding durum) will be between $100 and $114 a tonne or $2.70 to $3.10 a bushel this year.

Storey told the Acccent '87 - Taking Stock Conference in Edmonton that because there is a lot of guess work and assumptions which go into the forecast, there are no guarantees.

He said several factors would need to change for the price to be over $3.10 a bushel.

"In terms of prices being about $114/tonne ($3.10 a bushel), it will have to result from premiums on No.1 and No.2 grades, a decline in the Canadian dollar, or de-escalation of the (U.S.- European Economic Community) trade war," he said. "I feel that this is a smaller probability."

Looking at durum wheat, Storey said he expects it to continue to bring higher prices, this year, compared to spring wheat.

"On balance, the prospects should be for durum wheat to generate higher returns for the top grades of durum, within the range of five to 10 per cent," he said. "The farm price for No. 1 C.W. Amber Durum is forecast to be $120 a tonne or $3.25 a bushel."

With barley production again expected to exceed demand, Storey predicted the farm price for No. 1 barley will be $1.40 a bushel or $65 a tonne this year. Oat prices should be comparable.

He said malting barley won't be much different than it was last year. He estimated it will have an initial payment of between $150 to $165 a tonnne, depending on grade, with a final realized payments (basis Thunder Bay) in the $180 to $200 a tonne range.

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Contact: David Walker
427-7132

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

March 23, 1987
For immediate release

Beef faces competition

Beef prices should remain fairly good through the late 1980s but reduced demand and increased competition from other meat products will present a challenge to the industry, says a U.S. consultant.

While low feed grain prices will fuel the interest in beef production, reduced consumer demand for beef may keep the lid on prices says Bruce Ginn, a Kansas-based agricultural consultant.

"Over the longer term, prices in the entire cattle and beef complex will rise," Ginn told a recent Edmonton conference. "However, the price increase will be limited by reduced demand."

He said within the industry itself there will be strong demand for replacement cattle because of plenty of cheap feed, but the industry is also seeing a bigger share of the market being taken by pork and poultry.

Ginn told 200 producers and market specialists attending the Accent '87 - Taking Stock Conference that total U.S. meat production in 1987 is expected to rise by three per cent.

He said a three per cent decline in beef output is expected to be offset by four per cent more pork and 11 per cent more poultry.

"Undoubtedly, the largest increase in total meat supplies are expected to prevail in the summer and fall quarters of this year," he said. "At that time, increase in pork and poultry output will be substantial. This means increased competition for the beef industry as 1987 progresses and will make the prevailing supply of beef more difficult to move."

The consultant predicted that increased hog production will result in plentiful lower-priced pork supplies. At the same time large broiler supplies are also forcing chicken prices down.

The two "spell substantive competition for the beef business," he said.

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Contact: David Walker
427-7132

March 23, 1987
For immediate release

Hog prices expected to drop

There is still going to be money in pigs over the next 18 months, but not as much as there was last year, according to a U.S. economics specialist.

And Dr. Gene Futrell, says although his comments are based on the U.S. market, he expects a similar trend to follow in Canada.

Futrell, speaking at the recent Accent '87 - Taking Stock Conference in Edmonton says increased production and a changing trend in consumer preference is going to keep hog prices down.

He says farmers will still see a profit margin into 1988, but it will be well below the record highs of mid-1986.

"Market prospects continue to look reasonably good for a while longer," he told 200 producers and market specialists attending the Alberta Agriculture conference. "However, there is a concerned expectation that good profits and large supplies of low cost feed will encourage a sizable expansion in pork production before long. The beginnings of that buildup are probably already underway."

Futrell, a professor of economics and extension economist at Iowa State University, said hog production could increase by as much as 10 per cent by the end of the year.

He predicted a July-September price average in the $47 to $51 (U.S. dollars) per hundredweight (cwt) range. By late fall he is expecting prices to be down to the low $40 range. Prices in the last half of 1988 could be in the mid to low $30 range.

"While the specific supply and price levels that I've forecast may turn out a bit high or low, I think the trends in production and price will be on target," he said. "Although prices are forecast to be well below 1986 levels in the last half of the year, prices are expected to remain profitable."

Futrell said along with an expected increase in hog production, a growing consumer preference for poultry will also have an impact on pork sales.

(Cont'd)

Hog prices expected to drop (cont'd)

"There is some evidence that consumer demand for pork in the U.S. has declined some during the past three or four years," he said.

While at the same time the ratio of broiler (poultry) consumption to pork consumption has been increasing.

"Per capita consumption of pork for 1986 averaged a little over 58 pounds, retail weight, down from 62 pounds in 1985. Although the pork supply was down, a small increase in beef and sizable gains in broiler and turkey supplies kept per capita consumption of all red meat and poultry at a record level."

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Contact: David Walker
427-7132

March 23, 1987
For immediate release

Forage institute hires manager

A central Alberta man has been hired as secretary manager of the Alberta Forage Institute.

Don Halladay, of Rocky Mountain House, who has an extensive background in forage and beef production has assumed his new post working with institute members and forage producers in Alberta.

Based out of the Grey Wooded Forage Association office in Rocky Mountain House, Halladay's first duties will include working with forage associations in co-ordinating their past and future research projects.

He will also be responsible for monitoring and aiding in the progress of hay auctions in Alberta and maintaining an active role with forage and beef commodity groups.

Liason with government, forage associations, research facilities and producers will be a top priority.

The Alberta Forage Institute acts as an umbrella group for the forage associations in Alberta. Members include representatives from forage associations, the Forage Seed Council, Alberta Agriculture, Agriculture Canada research stations and the University of Alberta.

The forage institute provides a link between forage producers and government departments.

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Contact: Myron Bjorge
782-4641

March 25, 1981
For immediate release

Market [illegible]

A [illegible] with [illegible] Agriculture [illegible] development division has confirmed the appointment of two of its staff members to new and expanded roles.

[illegible] branch in Edmonton, [illegible] has continued responsibility as Trade Director - Latin America.

In the same announcement, Normand [illegible] Rous who is returning to the division as a trade director, after an 18 month stint with the department's agri-food development branch.

Along with his work in Latin America, Bienert will continue handling his main responsibility as Trade Director-Central North America. He had temporarily been handling the Latin America territory for some time.

"At this time, 25 to 30 per cent of Doug's time will be allocated to work in the Latin America territory with concentration in Mexico," says Normand. "He will continue the emphasis on two key areas in Mexico, namely market development for Alberta canola and livestock genetics."

Rous who had been seconded to the agri-food development branch, has returned to the division to handle eastern Canada and eastern U.S. market development efforts.

"Dave will have special responsibility for marketing pork and beef in North America," says Normand. "This special responsibility translates into increasing Alberta beef sales in the U.S. market. It is a top priority at this time."

The senior trade director also recognized the efforts of two other department employees, Susan Kitchen and Bob Tchir, who have played an important role in marketing programs.

Kitchen who is based in Calgary, has been with the marketing sector of Alberta Agriculture since 1975. Earlier this year she was appointed manager of the meat and dairy section of the agri-food development branch.

Tchir, who is working with Kitchen, was appointed marketing officer responsible for meat and dairy development. Tchir is based in Edmonton.

Market development staff changes confirmed (cont'd)

"I would also like to recognize the very solid contribution to marketing of Alberta agriculture and food products in the Alberta territory accomplished by Susan Kitchen," said Normand.

"And I wish to acknowledge the excellent work done by Bob Tchir, who returned to the marketing services division after a secondment of 18 months in the Americas branch."

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Contact: Lou Normand
427-4241

March 23, 1987
For immediate release

Agri-News Briefs

PORKY PIG WANTS A G.I. JOE?

It is doubtful if there will be a whole new market for toy makers, but work at the Agriculture Canada research station at Lacombe, indicates that pigs grow better when they have "toys" to play with. The recent study involved two pens of six-week-old pigs. One pen was equipped with a "toy", which involved an old car tire suspended from a chain slung across the pen. The young pigs could reach the tire and push it back and forth along the chain. The other pen of pigs was toyless. Both groups were fed the same rations and after about 12 weeks into the study both pens were filmed on a time-lapse video camera so animal behavior could be monitored. Preliminary results indicate the pigs with toys tended to have higher average daily gains (4 per cent greater) than their colleagues without toys. There also appeared to be less fighting and biting among the pigs with toys. Although more research is needed it appears the toys may result in production and behavioral advantages. For more information on the study contact the director of the Lacombe research station.

U.S. HOG AVERAGES IMPROVE

According to figures from the U.S. department of agriculture, American sows are producing more and bigger litters and farmers are shipping heavier hogs to market. In a recent presentation in Edmonton, Dr. Gene Futrell, a professor at Iowa State University, said production averages have been increasing. Quoting USDA figures, Futrell said the average farrowings per year from the 1970s to the early 1980s was 1.5. Between 1983 and 1985 the average increased to about 1.7 litters, a 22 per cent increase over the low for the period (1.4 litters in 1979). Litter size took a drop between 1970 and 1979 but increased sharply in the early 1980's averaging 7.38 to 7.65 pigs per litter. Live slaughter weight averaged 240 pounds during the 1970s but that increased to 243.7 pounds between 1980-85.

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Agri-News briefs (cont'd)

FARMERS SHOULD IGNORE THE GLOOM

Alberta farmers and ranchers shouldn't give in to the negative predictions affecting the industry, says a southern Alberta feedlot and packing plant operator. While there is no doubt that agriculture is having a tough time, producers should not be consumed by the bad news, says Garnet Altwasser, president of Lakeside Farm Industries Ltd. at Brooks. "The profitability of farming is very poor, but let's not kid ourselves into thinking this is the first time it's ever happened," he told the Accent '87 - Taking Stock Conference, in Edmonton. Although Altwasser realizes farmers deserve to make a decent living, he said their first responsiblity should be to feed the population as economically as possible. He told the 200 producers and market specialists attending the Alberta Agriculture conference that farmers need to stay on their toes. He said they need to get involved in marketing and recognize the factors that influence the industry. He said producers need to keep pace with technology and be able to change with trends and conditions.

TURKEY PRODUCTION INCREASES

Albertans, are following a Canadian trend by eating more turkey, according to figures released by Alberta Agriculture. Turkey production in the province during 1986 was pegged at 8.4 million kilograms, a 2.5 per cent increase over 1985, according to a report prepared by Alan Dooley, poultry analyst with the market analysis branch. Disappearance, which is a statistical term for consumption and other uses for the meat, was up by 14 per cent in Alberta over 1985. On the national scene turkey production in 1986 was estimated at 103.4 million kilograms, a 2.6 per cent increase over 1985. Turkey meat disappearance across the country increased by 6.5 per cent compared to 1985. Although production increases are expected in 1987, Dooley says prices will decline in the first half of the year. He says the price paid to producers should be within two or three cents per kilogram of prices paid in 1985.

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March 30, 1987

CANADIANA
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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

March 30, 1987
For immediate release

Rabies outbreak moving into Alberta

The public is urged to be wary of any animals acting strangely as officials deal with one of the worst rabies outbreaks in Alberta in nearly two decades.

There is no cause for panic, but residents should be cautious if they see skunks, which are the main carriers of the disease, or other wild and domestic animals acting abnormally, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Dr. Michael Dorrance, head of the department's problem wildlife program in Edmonton, says there have been more than 20 cases of rabies, mostly along the eastern edge of the province, discovered already this year. There was only one rabid skunk found in the province in all of 1986.

"This is the largest number of cases we've had in a two or three month period in the last 20 years," he says. "The open and mild winter has probably encouraged the spread of the disease."

Dorrance says pet owners should have their dogs and cats vaccinated against rabies. And anyone suspecting an animal has the disease should stay clear of it and call authorities to have it checked out. They should also avoid handling any animal found dead.

There was a dramatic increase in rabies in skunks in Saskatchewan in 1986 and the disease is spreading westward. There were 356 rabid skunks found last year, compared to a previous yearly average of between 75 and 150 cases. The number of skunks testing positive for rabies in Saskatchewan continues to be high during the first two months of 1987.

The Saskatchewan rabies problem is shifting west into Alberta.

"Rabid skunks have been diagnosed in several locations in Alberta," says Dorrance. "Rabies has been found in an area towards the Saskatchewan border southeast of Medicine Hat, in the County of Forty Mile near Etzikom, in the County of Newell, just north of Brooks and one positive skunk and a cat were discovered south of Vegreville.

(Cont'd)

"The Alberta Rabies Control Program has been put into action in each of these locations, in order to dramatically reduce the population of skunks in the vicinty of rabid skunks."

Dorrance says the open winter may be making the problem worse in two ways. Mild temperatures across the prairies probably meant more skunks survived the winter and the lack of snow made travel easier.

He says if people notice any unusual mortality or behavior in skunks they could contact the nearest district veterinary office of Agriculture Canada, a municipal or provincial pest control officer, agriculture service board office, the local veterinarian, fish and wildlife officer or the RCMP.

The specialist says a brain sample from the animal is used to make a laboratory diagnosis of rabies. He says people should use caution around the animals, but if a suspected carrier is destroyed efforts should be made to keep the brain intact.

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Contact: Mike Dorrance
427-5370

March 30, 1987
For immediate release

Centre gearing for 1987 tour season

One of Alberta's most popular horticultural showcases will launch its new season this spring with a new name.

Beginning in April, the Alberta Horticultural Research Center near Brooks will be officially known as the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center.

The name change reflects the expanded role the centre will assume in the area of special crops research. Special or alternate crops are field type crops such as peas, beans, lentils and sunflowers.

While much of the special crops work will be behind the scenes, the main attraction at the centre will continue to be the horticultural display.

"The research centre is a very popular stopping place for tourist traffic, school tours, bus tours and for many other casual visitors," says Thomas Krahn, director of the Alberta Agriculture facility.

"In 1986 the centre hosted more than 11,000 visitors. This included 40 pre-booked tours and many visitors who took advantage of the main site's self-guided tour of grounds and annual flower trials."

Krahn says about half of the pre-booked tours in 1986 were related to the centre's main role of providing information and research service to the commerical horticulture industry.

"1987 promises to be equally busy and staff at the centre will be pleased to be of assistance to organized tours and casual visitors," says the director.

Three daily research plot tours will be operated again this year. Groups will be able to pre-arrange visits. The director noted that although the attractions at the centre are unchanged, because of provincial government fiscal restraint, the public may find some minor changes in service.

No reservations are needed by casual visitors and they are encouraged to take advantage of the self-guided tour of the grounds.

(Cont'd)

Centre gearing for 1987 tour season (cont'd)

This tour will expose the visitor to a full collection of herbaceous perennials, a well-established rose garden, a typical landscape (including full-sized trees and shrubs, with a demonstration of five blue grass varieties), the Golden Prairie Arboretum with its collection of more than 500 ornamental plants and a broad range of annual flowers.

The walking tour is available seven days a week during daylight hours. Picnic and washroom facilities are available.

The centre, which is located just east of Brooks, will host its annual field day August 28. This year's event will be based around a general theme of pest control.

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Contact: Thomas Krahn
362-3391

March 30, 1987
For immediate release

Breeding season needs to be trimmed

Alberta cattlemen are losing money by allowing the beef herd breeding season to run on too long, says a provincial livestock specialist.

Dr. Laura Rutter, a reproductive physiologist with Alberta Agriculture in Edmonton says although some producers may not mind a calving season that lasts for five months, it is costing them dollars. The later in the season calves are born, the lighter they are at weaning.

The specialist based her comments on the results of a first-ever survey she initiated on beef cow pregnancy rates in Alberta. With the assistance of provincial veterinarians she hoped to find out what kind of track record producers had in getting their herds bred.

The survey of 62 Alberta beef herds, representing more than 6,600 head of cows, showed on average that pregnancy rates across the province were good and most cows headed into this winter in acceptable condition. But the length of breeding season, averaging 133 days, was more than double the recommended time for optimum production efficiency.

The impact of this extended breeding season translates into reduced weaning weights. For every 21 day increase in the length of the calving season, a producer could be losing an average of 30 pounds per calf in lost weaning weight. Calves born in the first 21 days of the calving season should be 120 pounds heavier than calves born between the 105 to 126 day range of the calving season.

Rutter says the survey indicates beef producers and extension specialists need to focus attention on reducing the length of the breeding season.

The survey wanted to know such things as herd location; number of females palpated for pregnancy; number of females pregnant - showing the number pregnant for more than 90 days and those pregnant for less than 90 days at the time of the pregnancy test; herd condition score; number of days the females were exposed to bulls; what producers did with open cows; and comments.

Rutter says she had hoped for a greater response from provincial veterinarians - only 11 returned survey forms - but the results give some indication of what is happening in the province.

(Cont'd)

Breeding season needs to be trimmed (cont'd)

The 6,612 breeding beef females tested in 62 herds represented about 0.6 per cent of the total of Alberta's breeding stock (according to 1987 inventory statistics).

The survey representation by region is as follows:

Region	No. of Herds	Total No. of Females
Peace River	13	1532
North West	9	771
North East	17	1854
North Central	7	604
South Central	4	581
Southern	12	1270

The survey results provided data on herd condition, length of breeding season and percentage of cows pregnant when the test was made last fall.

The reproductive specialist says ideally a herd should have a condition score of about three heading into winter. (Body condition is measured on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being very thin and 5 being very fat).

Specialists also promote a breeding season of between 45 to 60 days. A short breeding season means a short calving season, and heavier calves at weaning. It generally leads to an overall more efficient operation.

The percentage of females pregnant should be in the 90 per cent range, says Rutter.

The survey results showed the condition score had a provincial average of 2.9, while the average breeding season was 133 days and there was a 92.2 per cent pregnancy rate at the time of testing.

"There was a significant regional variation in average herd condition score and length of the breeding season, but all other parameters surveyed were similar among regions," says Rutter.

(Cont'd)

Breeding season needs to be trimmed (Cont'd)

Table 1. Regional Means

Region	Condition Score	Length of Breeding Season (days)	Females Pregnant (%)
Peace River	3.3 ± .1	134 ± 14	93.8 ± 2.5
North West	2.9 ± .2	159 ± 17	91.8 ± 3.0
North East	2.7 ± .1	136 ± 13	90.6 ± 2.2
North Central	3.1 ± .2	166 ± 20	95.1 ± 3.4
South Central	2.6 ± .2	79 ± 26	92.7 ± 4.5
Southern	2.8 ± .1	108 ± 15	89.0 ± 2.6
PROVINCIAL MEAN	2.9 ± .1	133 ± 7	92.2 ± 2.3
(Range)	(1.5 ± 4.0)	(42 ± 286)	(50 ± 100)

"There are a few observations worth noting," says the specialist. "Firstly, length of the breeding season was not related to the percentage of females pregnant. In other words, producers who limited the breeding season (as evident in the South Central Region, 79 days) had equivalent pregnancy rates to those producers who did not limit the length of time the females were exposed to bulls.

"Secondly, the results show that cows in better condition bred earlier than those kept in lower or poor condition.

"The regional and provincial average herd condition score was at or above recommended scores for optimum breeding efficiency (2.5 to 3.0). However, condition scores ranged from 1.5 to 4.0 and the correlations suggest that females with higher condition scores were more likely to have conceived in the first part of the breeding season.

"In contrast, the negative relationship between condition score and number of females less than 90 days pregnant indicates that females with lower condition scores conceived later in the breeding season."

(Cont'd)

Breeding season needs to be trimmed (Cont'd)

Rutter says the reasons for open females given in the comments section were thin condition, disease and/or questionable bull fertility. Bull fertility was by far the most commonly listed wher pregnancy rates were lower than expected for a particular herd or group of animals. Bull to female ratio was commonly listed as 1:25 to 1:30, but ranged from 1:50 in one very well managed herd to 1:10 in a herd using yearling bulls.

"Sound reproductive management is an integral part of any progressive cow/calf operation," she says. "Reproductive efficiency, however, is only one part of an operation and other equally important components of the whole include health care, nutrition, marketing and financial management strategies.

"There are numerous experts and specialists with whom you can consult regarding your individual operation's needs, strengths and weaknesses. I would advocate a team approach, calling on various experts depending on the type of problem and who could best fit that particular need.

The survey was compiled and analyzed with the cooperation of Dr. Terry Church, head, health management branch, animal health division and Dr. Laki Goonewardene, research analyst, beef cattle and sheep branch.

For more information on the survey, or other matters related to reproduction in domestic animals, contact Dr. Rutter, at the beef cattle and sheep branch, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6, 427-5304.

Rutter says she appreciated the assistance of veterinarians who did participate with the survey. Among those participating were:

Dr. R. J. Bell
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Dr. Doug Myers
Innisfail, Alberta

Dr. Chris Bredin
Breton, Alberta

Dr. Doug Reid
Cremona, Alberta

Dr. Wayne Lees
Lethbridge, Alberta

Dr. Terri Rowat
Vermilion, Alberta

Dr. W. Lindeman
Milk River, Alberta

Dr. G. S. Smith
Vermilion, Alberta

Dr. S. A. Maclean
Sherwood Park, Alta.

Dr. K. M. Smith
Vermilion, Alta.

Dr. Peter G. Moisan
Grande Prairie, Alta.

Contact: Dr. Laura Rutter
427-5304

March 30, 1987
For immediate release

Farmers caught between rock and a hard place

It's not that most prairie farmers don't care about the soil that grows their crops, it's often a matter of economics which affects how well they can conserve and maintain the soil resource, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

Len Fullen, land use co-ordinator with the department in Edmonton says producers realize that some traditional farming methods may adversely affect soil quality, but cannot afford to change their ways.

"Today's farmers face a tremendous challenge," says Fullen. "Many farmers acknowledge that there has often been more taken from the land than returned and that traditional farming practices are primarily to blame.

"They also realize the importance of maintaining the soil's productive capability, and as a result would do whatever was needed to minimize soil degradation on their farms. Most farmers have a basic stewardship ethic, they love the land and hope to see their farm remain in the family.

"The problem, however, is that they feel they cannot afford significant changes to the way they farm. Faced with low commodity prices (actually lower than 1971-72 prices when adjusted for inflation), a poor market outlook and increasing production costs they either cannot, or do not want to make any changes that might increase their risk."

Fullen, a supporter of the April 13 to 17 National Soil Conservation Week, says that in recent years summerfallowing and intensive tillage practices have been identified as major causes of soil degradation.

These practices leave little, if any, crop residue on the surface, and therefore leave the soil more susceptible to erosion. Also, during a fallow season, precipitation that would normally be used by plant growth percolates downward and contributes to the groundwater. Groundwater picks up soluble salts which are discharged wherever the watertable approaches the soil surface, causing a soil salinity problem.

(Cont'd)

Farmers caught between rock and hard place (cont'd)

"In the early days of prairie agriculture there were strong agronomic reasons for tilling the soil and leaving the land in fallow," he says. "Neither the types of farm equipment nor the wide range of herbicides and pesticides currently available could be used for proper seedbed preparation, weed and insect control and moisture retention.

"Although there is now less need for tillage and summerfallow, attitudes toward these practices are deeply ingrained in today's farmers. Certainly both tillage and summerfallow may be necessary in many situations, but not to the extent that they are presently being used.

"If we are to preserve our soil for the future we must re-examine our management practices today."

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Contact: Len Fullen
427-5359

March 30, 1987
For immediate release

One Peace River valley is plenty

It's hard to appreciate that the Peace River valley is a product of erosion, but it is a large scale example of what happens over thousands of years when water carries soil away.

This is not to suggest that every little washout in a wheat field is going to result in creation of a new Peace River valley, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture, but soil erosion can be stopped or controlled before it gets out of hand.

"Looked at from any view, the Peace River Valley makes a grand statement," says Garry Coy, regional soil specialist in Fairview. "It's the picturesque result of thousands of years of erosion by water. Its impact on the landscape is a major one, and we have adapted to it rather than trying to change it.

"Interestingly its existence has little direct effect on farmers. Perhaps size has become too large to be synonymous with effect. At the other end of the scale, sheet and rill erosion are commonly ignored and considered to be minor in effect."

But Coy says that really the opposite is true. A one time erosion event producing a rill just two inches deep and 10 inches wide by 500 feet in length, represents a soil loss of 6,000 pounds.

This type of erosion event is common in fields after the spring snow melt, he says. Normally no corrective action is taken other than to cultivate the soil and remove the evidence by spreading the surrounding soil into the eroded area.

"But when one considers that this loss is of the best topsoil and that it is likely to occur again in subsequent years, the losses are staggering," says Coy. "It means that 30 tons of topsoil can be lost in just 10 years. And with each passing year the remaining topsoil is spread thinner to compensate."

(Cont'd)

The soil specialist says the situation need not exist. Technical resources and financial assistance are available to help producers correct them.

"Agricultural Service Boards across the province are willing to work with you, the responsible and progressive farmer," he says. "Talk to your agricultural fieldman or district agriculturalist and find out what's available. Your attention to small details can add up to large savings of our soil resources."

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Contact: Garry Coy
835-2291

March 30, 1987
For immediate release

Alfalfa rides in to arrest salinity

With about three million acres of Alberta farmland already damaged to some extent by soil salinity, alfalfa is quickly gaining ground as the farmers best bet to control the spread of the salty epidemic.

Researchers and producers alike say the forage legume can have a two-fold benefit. Properly used it can halt the spread of salinity, while also being an economical crop to grow.

The threat of dryland soil salinity has long been a concern to soil scientists and farmers. It is estimated that if the trend isn't reversed it will cost farmers more than $1 billion in lost revenues by the year 2000.

Soil salinity is caused by high water tables. The water forces salty minerals usually found deep in the soil to the surface, rendering the land useless for crop production.

And the problem is bigger than first thought. A satellite inventory of Alberta revealed 2.5 million acres are salinized. Projected expansion of these seeps, although sporadic, is at five per cent per year, accounting for annual losses of 125,000 acres.

"Basically our problem is a water management problem," says Hank Vander Pluym of Alberta Agriculture. "Salinity is caused by a high water table. If we can eliminate the high water table, the majority of salinity problems will disappear."

Alfalfa helps by consuming large volumes of ground water. It has a long growing season and deep rooting capability.

Action to halt and reverse the spread of soil salinity has been mounted on different fronts.

The formation of the Dryland Salinity Control Association (DSCA) got farmers directly involved in the development of government policy on salinity control. The association's main goal is to keep the problem from getting worse.

"The main concern of the association is to prevent the spread of salt to productive land and not to concentrate too heavily on the expensive reclamation systems", says Bill Norris, president of DSCA.

(Cont'd)

Alfalfa rides in to arrest salinity (cont'd)

Alberta Agriculture and Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) have also established a Dryland Salinity Investigation Service available to farmers.

The investigation determines the soil groundwater conditions causing the problem and advises the farmer on appropriate controls, such as alfalfa and recropping.

Because there has been some concern over the economics of growing alfalfa, Don Wentz of Alberta Agriculture has launched an economic cost and return study with 45 salinity farmers.

"The first year, when alfalfa is being established is expensive, but the economics are competitive with cereals over the five year recommended stand," says Wentz.

He says most aspects of conservation farming are expensive and require a long term commitment on the part of the farmer. Many farmers are finding it difficult to undertake conservation practices because of low commodity prices.

"Considering the value of our natural soil resource, it is important to conserve its productive capability for future generations of farmers," says the specialist. "Alfalfa could be the crop that helps conserve the soil and still generates a competitive economic return."

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Contact: Hank Vander Pluym 381-5538
Don Wentz 381-5126
Craig Wood PFRA - 327-4410

March 30, 1987
For immediate release

Three-way trade agreement reached with Thailand firm

The universal appeal of the good old North American hotdog has played a role in helping an Alberta company become part of a three-way trade deal with two Asian firms.

UFL Foods Inc. of Edmonton, a firm which manufactures spice mixes and other products for the food processing industry, has just struck an agreement to sell one of its spice packages to a food processing company in the Kingdom of Thailand. In turn UFL will be buying some raw material for its Canadian business from the Bangkok firm.

To complete the triple play, the Thai company will be selling North American style hotdogs made with UFL spice mixes, into the Hong Kong mar[illegible].

"It may sound a bit complicated, but it's a good opportunity for all companies involved," says Bill Anderson, an Alberta Agriculture trade director in Edmonton.

"I think this is the first time this type of agreement between Alberta and an Asian country has been made."

The Alberta company is a division of the Canadian owned UFL Foods Inc. As part of its operation, UFL co-produces and markets deheated ground yellow mustard seed, which is used as a "meat binder", along with spices for different foods, including spices for weiners.

UFL's contact with the Thai meat processing company began last year, when a senior government official from the southeast Asian country visited Alberta.

"In June of 1986 Dr. Snoh Unakal, secretary general of the National Economic and Social Development Board of Thailand visited Edmonton," says Anderson. "Through Alberta Agriculture, a representative of UFL was invited to meet with Dr. Snoh.

"During that meeting, Dr. Snoh, who is the chief economic decision maker in Thailand, expressed keen interest in UFL Foods."

Following the Edmonton meeting, a UFL representative visited Bangkok to continue negotiations with a Thai firm interested in producing hotdogs.

(Cont'd)

Spice agreement reached with Thailand firm (cont'd)

The meetings resulted in a contract between UFL and the Thai food processor for the weiner spice. The Edmonton office also provided technical advice in helping the Bangkok firm adjust its process to duplicate the North American style hotdog.

Another aspect of the deal was an agreement for UFL to buy high quality spice oil from the Thai company to be used in its spice mix formulations in Canada.

"This is the type of arrangement we strive for," says Anderson. "An Alberta company has found a new market for its spice mixes as well as a new source for a high quality raw material it uses. At the same time, a Thai company is able to expand its product line and find new export markets in Hong Kong.

"The efforts of Alberta Agriculture largely involved bringing the two parties together and facilitating negotiations. The companies handled the rest. These efforts have been successful and we believe it has led to a permanent working relationship between the Thai company and UFL Foods Inc."

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Contact: Bill Anderson
427-4241

March 30, 1987
For immediate release

Agri-News Briefs

BOTTOM LINE MEANT HIGHER INCOME

The total realized net income of Alberta farmers and ranchers for 1986 is estimated to have increased 45 per cent over 1985 to $788 million, the highest level on record, according to Alberta Agriculture statistics. Realized net income, which is income available after expenses to pay down principal on debt, for personal consumption, investment and savings, increased in 1986 because of lower operating expenses, a healthier livestock sector and substantial government program payments. Payments under the Western Grain Stabilization Program, crop insurance and other programs accounted for an estimated 17 per cent of total farm cash receipts in 1986. In addition, payments under the Alberta Farm Fuel Distribution Allowance, Alberta Feed Grain Market Adjustment program and other programs reduced total operating expenses by an estimated 12.6 per cent. For more information on farm receipts and expenses contact Nithi Govindasamy at the statistics branch, 427-4006.

CASH RECEIPTS EXPECTED TO DROP IN 1987

Total farm cash receipts in Alberta are expected to drop about 5.4 per cent in 1987, according to an Alberta Agriculture forecast. Receipts are expected to drop to $3.622 billion because of falling grain revenues, fewer cattle marketings and a moderation in hog prices. The decline would be more severe if not for the estimated $266 million in payments under the Special Canadian Grains Program, and an estimated $352 million in Western Grain Stabilization program payments. Total operating expenses for the year are forecast to increase 4.4 per cent to $2.537 billion resulting in a 22.4 per cent reduction in net cash income. Realized net income in 1987 is expected to decline by about 39 percent to $478 million, from the record level of 1986. For more information on farm receipts and expenses contact Nithi Govindasamy, at the statistics branch, 427-4006.

(Cont'd)

Agri-News briefs (cont'd)

FORAGE SEEDS IN STRONG DEMAND

Strong demand for forage seeds is expected to keep prices high through 1987 according to an Alberta Agriculture forecast. Strong export demand has boosted prices for forage seeds to near record levels. In the current season, export shipments are 45 per cent higher than shipments at the same time last year. In the 1985-86 crop year forage seed exports were pegged at about 25.7 million kilograms. If the trend continues 1986-87 exports could approach the record levels of 1982-83. Seed supplies of many species are already short and this will help support forage seed values. The strong demand for grasses and legumes will continue through 1987 and 1988. Barring an exceptionally large 1987 forage seed crop, prices should remain at attractive levels although not likely as high as at present. Weather conditions will play an important part in the final price because of its influence on seed yields. For more information on the forage seed situation contact Fred Boyce at the market analysis branch at 427-5383.

NUMBERS TELL THE STORY

Soil degradation is an overall term to describe problems involving soil loss and quality. It covers both water and soil erosion, reduced soil quality caused by organic matter loss, increased acidity and salination of soil which also reduces productivity, and in some instances soil compaction. It is estimated that 10 to 15 per cent of Alberta's 30 million acres of agricultural land are affected to some degree by a soil-related problem. In a 1984 survey about 94 million acres in western Canada were subject to erosion. It was estimated 12.4 million acres were at low risk, 48.6 million acres were at medium risk and 33.1 million acres were at high risk from erosion.

(Cont'd)

IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE MUCH, BUT...

A good rainfall at the right time is often worth millions of dollars to farmers, but rainfall at the wrong time can carry away millions of dollars worth of soil. It may not look like a big deal, but even a small washout in a field can represent tons of lost soil. Soil specialists say a washout about four inches deep and four or five feet wide, and about 200 yards long, can represent a loss of about 150 tons of soil per acre.

IF YOU CAN SEE IT, IT COSTS MONEY

A little soil blowing around on a windy day may not seem all that bad, right? Wrong. Soil specialists say it doesn't take much blowing soil to add up to a big loss. The rule of thumb is that if you can see wind erosion at all, if you notice that soil is blowing, you are losing at least five tons of soil per acre. It has also been calculated that it would cost up to $34,000 an acre or $85,000 per hectare to replace the nutrients lost to wind erosion. If there are about a million acres in western Canada affected by soil erosion the price tag to replace the lost nutrients could reach $34 billion. Even if it were practical to spend this money to replace nutrients, it's a slow process. With very intensive management it is estimated to take 25 years to replace (physically build up) one inch of top soil lost through erosion.

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AGRI-NEWS

April 6, 1987

For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

April 6, 1987
For immediate release

4-H'ers sell safety

Alberta 4-H members will be promoting safety on farm fields and helping their own clubs at the same time, through a unique fund raising project this spring.

The 4-H'ers will canvas their farming communities selling a pesticide safety kit, says Bob Coe, provincial 4-H media specialist in Edmonton.

While the kits will be useful to farmers exposed to agricultural chemicals, a portion of the sale proceeds will be kept for 4-H club activities.

The kits contain rubber gloves, a reinforced plastic apron, safety goggles, a disposable respirator, plus literature relating to the use and cleaning of the protective clothing. Each kit, subsidized by Hoechst Canada Ltd. Regina, will sell for $30, with 4-H clubs retaining $10.

The Alberta 4-H council ordered 2,000 kits from Hoechst, following a presentation at the council's annual meeting, by David Thompson, Hoechst Northern Alberta representative. The kits will be distributed to 4-H Clubs throughout the province.

"The program provides an opportunity for a large number of farmers to try out and evaluate the use of protective clothing," said Thompson. "This is the first year of the safety kit project and depending on its success there is a high probability it will continue."

Maurice Delage, vice president and general manager of Hoechst in Regina, said the company hopes to play a dual role by contributing to "the continued success of the 4-H organization and its goals, and at the same time encourage farmers to use safe pesticide handling equipment."

The growing use of pesticide safety equipment and clothing was borne out by a two year survey made by Alberta Agriculture's crop protection branch. The department made a random sampling of about 500 Alberta grain farmers in 1983. The same group was surveyed again in 1984.

(Cont'd)

Former Alberta 4-H Premier's Award Winner, Doug Sawyer, of Pine Lake, centre, models some of the safety gear found in a kit that 4-H members in Alberta will be selling to farmers. Looking on is David Thompson of Hoescht Canada Ltd. and Elizabeth Buday, Alberta 4-H council president.

About 75 per cent of farm families responding to the second questionnaire reported using protective clothing while working with farm chemicals in 1984. This was an increase of 10 per cent from 1983.

The percentage of increase of farmers using protective devices in the two year period was significant, says Coe. Eye goggle use was 10 per cent in 1983 and 22 per cent in 1984; rubber gloves, 47 per cent in 1983 and 84 per cent in 1984; rubber boots, five per cent in 1983 and 21 per cent in 1984; and coverall use went from 11 per cent in 1983 to 41 per cent in 1984.

"The 1983 survey indicated many farmers wore regular work clothes, making little effort to protect themselves from skin exposure to farm chemicals," says Bertha Eggertson, Alberta Agricultures clothing and textiles specialist in Edmonton. "Based on the 1983 survey, an estimated 5,000 farmers experience varying degrees of pesticide poisoning."

(Cont'd)

4-H'ers sell safety (cont'd)

Poor laundry practices are another hidden form of chemical contamination, says the specialist who has been involved with research in farm clothes chemical contamination. She says clothing worn around chemicals should not be stored or washed with other family laundry.

The survey showed that contaminated work clothes were stored for washing with family clothing in almost 40 per cent of cases reported. More than 40 per cent of respondents laundered contaminated clothes with family clothing.

"The 4-H and Hoechst program to promote safe use of farm chemicals is a very worthwhile project," says Eggertson. "Not only will the farmers who buy the kits benefit, but by simply selling these kits throughout their communities, 4-H members themselves will learn more about the value of practicing safety first, especially with farm chemicals."

About 350 questionnaires will be sent out to selected farms this summer to update statistics gathered in the 1983-84 surveys.

For more information about the 4-H Pesticide Safety Kit program contact your local regional 4-H specialist.

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Contact: Bob Coe
427-2541

April 6, 1987
For immediate release

New technology for detecting pregnancy

Researchers at the University of Idaho have developed a method for detecting pregnancy in cattle based on the presence of a specific protein in the blood.

This protein, which is only produced after an animal becomes pregnant, may be detected as early as 30 days after mating.

The laboratory testing process isn't likely to replace the routine fall pregnancy test relied on by commercial beef producers, but it may play an important role for those in the purebred breeding business.

The protein being measured is known as pregnancy-specific protein B (PSPB) in the blood.

"Dr. Garth Sasser and co-workers have developed a method which can measure PSPB in serum from pregnant cattle earlier and more accurately than the routine method of rectal palpation," says Dr. Laura Rutter, a reproductive physiologist with Alberta Agriculture in Edmonton.

They use a radioimmunoassay (RIA) which is a laboratory method employing radioactive material to measure or detect a small amount of protein.

"PSPB is a protein produced by the placenta and appears to be unique to the ruminant species," says Rutter. "Proteins produced by the placenta have been used to detect pregnancy for many years in other species.

"For example, human chorionic gonadotropin, discovered in the urine of pregnant women in 1927, can be measured in blood or urine as early as eight to 10 days after conception. Pregnant mare serum gonadotropin (PMSG) was discovered by Cole and Hart in 1930 and has been useful for detecting pregnancy in horses.

"According to Sasser and co-workers the amount of PSPB gradually increases in the blood from 17 to 30 days after mating, through gestation, peaking about two days before calving," says Rutter. "After calving, PSPB levels gradually decrease and are about half the maximum prepartum level by 21 days postpartum. Further research is required to establish the time when PSPB levels again become undetectable after calving."

(Cont'd)

New technology for detecting pregnancy (cont'd)

"Similar pregnancy markers, specific to pregnancy and not to just phases of the normal estrous cycle as is progesterone, had not been identified and/or measurable in cow serum before Sasser's work."

Rutter says refinement of the RIA process and better understanding of when the pregnancy protein first shows up in the blood as well as how long it remains after calving, might provide the producer and/or veterinarian "with a valuable new tool for early detection of pregnancy in cattle".

The specialist notes the research with radioimmunoassays is only part of the work being done in developing new techniques for pregnancy testing. Another system, known as enzyme-linked immunoassays (ELISA) which can be used in the field, is also being tested.

"Radioimmunoassays are forerunners to the development of enzyme-linked immunoassays," says the specialist. "Typically done under laboratory conditions using radioactive material, RIA can take from two to five days to obtain results. ELISA methods are quick (within minutes), using a color reaction instead of radioactivity and can be adapted to on-farm use."

Calfcheck is an example of a product now on the market, which uses an ELISA method to detect progesterone in blood or milk. Rutter says ELISA methods are not typically intended to measure the quantity of a particular hormone, but instead provide quick, accurate YES or NO results about whether that hormone is present.

The reproductive specialist says the department will be interested in the results of test work now being conducted on the reliability of Calfcheck. Rutter says she believes the product is too expensive, at the moment, for general use in a commercial cow herd operation.

For further information regarding this or other matters related to reproduction in domestic animals, contact Rutter, at the beef cattle and sheep branch, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5T6, or phone 427-5304.

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Contact: Dr. Laura Rutter
427-5304

April 6, 1987
For immediate release

Milk metering system being tested

There may be changes in the way Alberta milk is measured for payment purposes, if a new metering system now being tested in the province, proves successful.

The specially designed mobile metering system, that can measure volume and take milk samples as milk is being pumped from the farm bulk tank, is being tested in a joint Alberta Agriculture and Alpha Dairy demonstration.

Although this type of metering equipment is used extensively in Europe this is the first time it has been tried in North America. Along with Alberta interest, U.S. officials are also watching the project.

The study involves monitoring the operation of the sophisticated mi metering system which has been mounted on an Alpha Dairy bulk milk truck

Manufactured by Hackman of Finland, the metering system can measure milk volume and automatically take a milk sample as milk is pumped from the farm bulk tanks onto the truck. It may seem a simple concept, but milk volume is difficult to measure because milk bubbles and foams easily.

The system, which is accurate to within plus or minus .25 per cent, would limit discrepancies in milk measurement, says Ray Grapentine, a milking management specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

A dipstick method is now used on Alberta dairy farms to determine milk volumes. The measuring sticks which are calibrated for particular bulk tanks, are dipped into the tank. The level recorded on the dip stick is converted to volume. And that volume of milk is used to determine how much the farmer is paid.

Once the milk in the farm holding tank has been measured, it is pumped into the bulk truck and mixed with milk from other dairy farms on the route.

Grapentine says the dipstick method has served the industry well, but there can be concern about its accuracy. He says if the milkhouse floor shifts or if the shape of the bulk tank changes, the volume conversion can be off.

"Ongoing concern in assuring absolute fairness in milk sales transactions as well as the popularity of these (metering) systems elsewhere, have prompted this initiative," says Grapentine.

(Cont'd)

Milk metering system being tested (cont'd)

"The installation and operation of this milk metering system will enable us to gain invaluable first-hand knowledge and experience with this type of system. We will be in a good position to discover the advantages and disadvantages of this technology. If this equipment is to be a viable alternative for Alberta's dairy industry, we must know whether it can operate properly under the rather harsh and extreme conditions that can be encountered in Alberta and at what cost."

Although Hackman claims to have 3,000 of these systems in use in Scandanavia alone, Grapentine says it is important to see how the unit works after being bounced around Alberta roads and being exposed to the dust, cold and heat.

As a further check, the system will also have to be tested and approved by the weights and measures department of Canada Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

"The metering system will also provide a valuable yardstick with which to measure the accuracy of our present dipstick methods," says the specialist.

The on-truck metering system will be tested for several months, says Grapentine. A Hackman meter engineer from Finland supervised the installation and calibration of the system. Also on hand was a representative from the United States bureau of measurement, who is also monitoring the system.

"The extensive and ongoing co-operation of the Alpha milk company and its employees in the execution of this project on behalf of Alberta's dairy industry is especially appreciated," he says.

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Contact: Ray Grapentine
352-1223

April 6, 1987
For immediate release

Soil conservation week raises awareness

In an agricultural province like Alberta, it may appear there is no limit to the amount of good soil on which to grow crops, but over much of the province there is less than 15 cm of topsoil to work with, says a provincial specialist.

And this relatively narrow layer of topsoil - a fundamental resource for Alberta's agriculture industry - is at risk of being lost if conservation measures aren't employed now, says John Hermans, head of Alberta Agriculture's soil conservation section in Edmonton.

It's not as though Albertans are going to wake up one morning and suddenly find all the soil gone, but if proper conservation isn't practised the soil needed to grow crops and produce feed for livestock will continue to blow and wash away by the tonnes.

"The soil that feeds us and supports our farming and food industries takes centuries to create - but only a few years of neglect to lose," says Hermans.

The specialist says that's why National Soil Conservation Week, April 13 to 17, will play a vital role in making people aware of the importance of soil conservation.

"Not only farmers, but everyone, from store owners to downtown apartment dwellers need to be concerned about saving this very fundamental natural resource," says Hermans.

"Considering all the things people have to be concerned about in the world it's hard to stress the importance of saving soil - there seems to be no shortage of it. But of all the issues we face, soil conservation is one of the few things we as Albertans can actually do something about."

During the third annual soil conservation week there will be a media campaign as well as other promotional events aimed at raising the public's awareness of soil conservation.

(Cont'd)

Soil conservation week raises awareness (cont'd)

Hermans says it is important for consumers to understand the significance of conservation, and to support programs and research that will help protect the soil.

"Soil is like a bank of nutrients," says Hermans. "We should replace what we take out. We haven't always been doing this."

Soil conservation programs tackle the major problems facing agricultural production. Programs are aimed at erosion control, including both wind and water erosion, which carry away hundreds of tonnes of soil a year. They also deal with soil salinity, a mounting problem caused when natural salt-like material, which may be relatively deep in the ground, is forced to the surface, rendering the soil useless.

"National Soil Conservation Week is a way of focusing the nation's attention on the state of our soils," says Hermans. "We need to focus on the potential problems and dangers and look at the solutions and answers.

"Consumers of agricultural products and their governments must effectively help and support farmers in tackling soil degradation. Soil conservation is everybody's business."

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Contact: John Hermans
422-4385

April 6, 1987
For immediate release

The green, green grass keeps the soil home

While it is impossible to plant grass on every acre of Alberta farmland to eliminate soil loss, a specialist with Alberta Agriculture says growing forage crops can be a wise management tool to protect soil where water erosion is a problem.

"In the last five years hundreds of Alberta farmers have benefited from this simple management tool," says Garry Coy, a regional soil specialist with the department in Fairview. "Indirectly the benefits to society as a whole are even greater.

"When water flows over soil instead of percolating into it, the potential for erosion is high. Grow a perennial, like grass, in the same soil and your worries are essentially over."

With annual management of grass cover for productive purposes such as hay, the liability becomes an asset, he says. Planting grass will help overcome 90 per cent of the on-farm erosion problems caused by water.

Coy says the key to using this approach requires each farmer to understand the circumstances which influence water movement over his land and recognize erosion prone locations.

Steepness of slope, amount of water and soil type are among the most important factors.

"With this information you can plan for protection," he says. "Your Agricultural Service Board and district agriculturalist are there to help you. Technical and financial assistance is available to assist you in turning liabilities into long term assets. Make your mark on the world green and inviting."

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Contact: Garry Coy
835-2291

April 6, 1987
For immediate release

The humble forage

It may not be as glamorous as some other commodities in the world of agriculture, but grass might very well be the crop that saves the bacon of prairie farmers and in more ways than one.

With more than 40 species of grass and legumes available in Canada these crops can fill a double role of improving soil quality and acting as natural cover to keep soil from washing and blowing away. They can also provide good economic returns.

"Slightly more than 100 years ago there was money to be made in grass," says Bjorn Berg, an Alberta Agriculture forage specialist in Vermilion. "You could lease grazing land in Alberta, then the Northwest Territory, for one cent an acre.

"About 50 years later you could still make money from grass. After the eastern townships had stopped blowing to Saskatchewan, thousands of acres of abandoned cropland were seeded to crested wheatgrass, a perennial grass highly adapted to the climate and soils in eastern Alberta. Pasture and grass seed conserved the soil and kept people on the land."

He says in the last few years there have been scenes reminiscent of the 1930's. There have been dust storms, ditches full of top soil and poor markets for cereal crops.

"But, there's still money in grass," says Berg. "Crested wheatgrass seed retails for almost $10 per kg, $1 more than T-bone steak."

There are more than 30 species of grasses available in Canada. Some species like meadowfoxtail can tolerate acid soils; others like tall wheatgrass, saline soils. Creeping rooted species, like streambank wheatgrass, make good sods that resist wind and water erosion. And some new grasses from Dr. Jan Weijer, a University of Alberta researcher, may have very low maintenance requirements and even natural weed inhibitors.

Cont'd)

The humble forage (cont'd)

"Grass is usually grown in association with a legume," says Berg. All nine legume species available can improve soil fertility because they fix their own nitrogen. Several are bloat resistant, making them safe for grazing animals. And they all have adaptations which make them useful for conservation farming."

As an example, the specialist says salinization is as much a threat to the land as wind or water erosion. Some varieties of alfalfa can be used to lower the water table and help to control or reverse the spread of salinity.

He says an experiment just north of Viking should prove how useful alfalfa may be at reducing salinity levels in soils in the area.

"Grass was one of the reasons Alberta became a province," says Berg. "Grass is the reason for our productive and fertile soils. And it's grass that will be the cheapest and most effective means of conserving our soils."

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Contact: Bjorn Berg
853-1109

April 6, 1987
For immediate release

Soil erosion is a stubborn problem

There is no mystery about how to keep soil from blowing away, but farmers and soil specialists agree that it's easier said than done.

Soil erosion is not a new problem, but it is a major one for many Alberta producers, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

With increased production demands, new farming methods and dramatic variations in weather, it can be a complex problem to solve, says John Timmermans, a soil and conservation specialist with the department in Airdrie.

"The causes of wind erosion, damages created, and management and control practices have been talked about for over 60 years," he says "The inter-relationships between soil type, the nature and amount of protective cover, and the wind are generally well understood.

"Nevertheless, wind erosion has been particularly severe in recent years. It has been described as the worst since the 1930's. Poor crop growth in combination with open winters and high winds has resulted in soil drifting. This has sparked renewed concern among farmers and urban people alike."

The specialist says advances in agricultural technology have improved farmers' capability to practise soil conservation. Better tillage implements, larger tractors and chemicals for effective weed control, help in conserving soil moisture.

"However these advances have also led to changes in farming practices which increase the risk of losing the productive value of the soil through erosion," says Timmermans.

He says erosion means the loss of that fraction of soil highest in organic matter. And the value of that organic matter cannot be underestimated.

(Cont'd)

Soil erosion is a stubborn problem (cont'd)

"Most of us are aware that soil organic matter, or humus, is that part of the soil which gives it quality," he says. "We should also be aware that about half of the organic matter present in our soils, some 60 to 80 years ago, is now gone. This organic matter loss is greatly accelerated as we allow soil erosion to continue."

Timmermans says when it comes to soil quality, an ounce of prevention is literally worth a pound of cure.

"To protect the soil from wind erosion, one-third to two-thirds of a ton of straw per acre in the form of standing stubble is needed," he says "However, to replace the amount of organic matter lost by the erosion of one inch of dark brown topsoil, 50 to 60 tons of straw per acre would be needed."

But, it is not all bad news, he says, as more producers are practising conservation farming techniques.

"More farmers are maintaining high levels of production while reducing tillage, and substituting some tillage with chemical weed control," he says. "Although changes in general farming practices seem slow, a sincere effort is being made to deal with one of the real threats to both short and long term agricultural livelihood - wind erosion".

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Contact: John Timmermans
948-8539

April 6, 1987
For immediate release

Miracle products being promoted - again

Alberta farmers should be skeptical of products that claim to work miracles in improving soil and crop productivity, say Alberta Agriculture specialists.

"Promotion and sale of unproven soil amendment products is becoming an increasing concern in southern Alberta," says Ross McKenzie, a soil fertility specialist with the department in Lethbridge. "We are seeing a deluge of special soil supplements being promoted with incredible claims. Some products will supposedly eliminate the need for fertilizers while others promote miraculous reclamation of problem soils."

One expert from the University of Saskatchewan says the only thing some soil amendments are good at is taking your money.

The department specialists say producers should be cautious in buying unproven products. If they do plan to use them, start out small and leave an untreated strip next to the treated strip for comparison.

Producers are advised that there are three types of products being promoted:

1. Enzymes and Hormones

Claims made for enzymes are usually associated with the release of nutrients by speeding up the breakdown of soil organic matter which is a process call mineralization.

In practice, there are two problems associated with the use of enzymes to speed up the mineralization or breakdown of organic matter: (i) there are many enzymes involved in the sequence of reactions in the mineralization process and (ii) enzymes are inactivated very quickly when added to soil.

(Cont'd)

"Even if we could effectively increase the rate of mineralization of organic matter with the addition of enzymes, its desirability is highly questionable," says McKenzie. "We should be more concerned about maintaining and building soil organic matter levels rather than increasing the rate of organic matter breakdown."

Plants produce hormones to regulate various growth functions. There are several effective growth regulators registered and used commercially which are foliar applied to control plant height. But the benefits of hormones and enzymes as soil amendments have not been proven.

2. Soil and Seed Inoculants

These products usually contain live cultures of microorganisms. Inoculation is a process of coating seeds of legume crops such as alfalfa, peas, beans or lentils with specific bacteria.

The bacteria live in association with roots of legumes and convert nitrogen gas (N_2) in the air, into forms which can be used by the crop. This reduces the need for nitrogen fertilizer for legumes. However, legume crops are the only cultivated crops which have this ability. Crops such as wheat, barley, oats, rye, canola, flax and others do not have the ability to "fix" their own nitrogen.

"Active biotechnology research programs are attempting to genetically engineer this ability into non-legume crops," says the specialist. "Some companies are claiming to have developed seed and soil inoculants that work for non-legume crops. Unfortunately, these products do not work and their promoters are simply trying to ride on the shirt tails of biotechnology."

3. Soil Amendments for Saline Soils

There are several soil amendment products promoting reclamation of saline soils, however none have ever proven to be effective, says McKenzie.

(Cont'd)

Miracle products being promoted - again (cont'd)

There are no amendments which will chemically remove, change or neutralize soluble salts. The only method of amelioration of a saline soil is by physical removal, accomplished by leaching the salts out of the root zone.

For dryland saline seeps, control is achieved through careful crop planning, and continuous cropping of recharge and discharge areas. The process can take years before the salinization process is reversed.

On irrigated lands, reclamation can be achieved through canal lining and subsurface drainage.

Les Henry, soils professor and extension specialist at the University of Saskatchewan, says that "for the most part, soil amendments will relieve your bank account of any undue outward pressure because of excess funds. Caveat emptor (buyer beware)."

"Farmers should be skeptical of products that make miraculous claims of soil improvement and crop productivity," says McKenzie. "Anyone that is curious about a new unproven product should only try it on a limited scale of a few acres. An untreated check strip should be left adjacent to the treated area and careful observation of crop growth and yield should be made."

For further information on soil amendments contact one of the following Alberta Agriculture specialists:

Ross McKenzie	Soil Fertility Specialist	381-5126	Lethbridge
Doug Penney	Soil Fertility Specialist	427-5346	Edmonton
Don Wentz	Soil/Crop Specialist	381-5126	Lethbridge
Hank Vander Pluym	Soil Salinity Specialist	381-5538	Lethbridge
Brent Paterson	Head, Drainage Branch	381-5515	Lethbridge

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Contact: Ross McKenzie
381-5126

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

Coming Agricultural Events

1987

Alberta Chapter - Soil Conservation Society of America
Spring Conference
Edmonton Inn
Edmonton.....April 8
Len Leskiw - Edmonton - 463-7875

Canadian Forage Council Annual Meeting
Port O'Call Inn
Calgary.....April 9

National Soil Conservation Week
Meetings and Seminars
Throughout Alberta.....April 13 - 17
John Hermans - Edmonton - 422-4385

Hudson Bay Route Association, Annual Convention
Wayside Inn
Lloydminster.....April 13 - 14

Alberta Pork Producers Marketing Board - Annual Meeting
Chateau Lacombe
Edmonton, ...April 14 - 15

Reclamation Targets for the 1990s
Westin Hotel
Edmonton.....May 4 - 5
Chris Powter - Edmonton - 427-4380

Agriculture Workshop for Lenders
Olds College Campus
Olds, Alberta.....May 31 - June 5
Wanda Johnson - 556- 4240 or Doug Barlund - 556-4245

Livestock Marketing Congress
Livestock Industry Institute
Harbour Castle Hilton
Toronto, Ontario.....June 9 - 11
Cindy Fernald, Mike Sweet Kansas City, Missouri - (816) 531-2235

Alberta Institute of Agrologists - Annual Meeting
Convention Inn South
Edmonton.....June 12 - 13
Kathleen MacDonald-Date - Edmonton - 427-4026

University of Alberta - 66th Annual Feeders' Day
University of Alberta Farm Research Station
Edmonton.....June 12
A. Stephen - Edmonton - 432-2343

Coming Agricultural Events (cont'd)

Alberta Cattle Commission - Semi-annual meeting
The Lodge
Red Deer.....June 15 - 16

Canadian Water Resources Annual Conference
Westin Hotel
Winnipeg.....June 15 - 18
Manfred Samp - Winnipeg - (204) 949-3123

Alberta Womens' Week
Olds College
Olds, Alberta.....July 20 - 23
Kathy Lowther - 485-2236

Soil Conservation Society of America - 1987 Annual Conference
Billings, Montana.....August 2 - 5
John Hermans - Edmonton - 422-4385

Agricultural Institute of Canada - Annual Conference
University of Western Ontario
London.....August 24 - 27
Andy Teruands - London - (613) 232-9459

Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center - Field Day at the research centre on TransCanada Highway
5 kilometres east of Brooks.....August 28
Rudy Esau or Joyce Clark - Brooks - 362-3391

Impact of Climate Change on the Canadian Prairies
Workshop/Symposium
Edmonton.....September 9 - 11
Bonnie Magill - Edmonton - 422-2070

Western Canada Fertilizer Association - Annual Convention
Fantasyland Hotel
Edmonton.....September 27 - 29
Ed Zenko - Edmonton - 426-3550

National "Outstanding Young Farmers" Program
Rotary House, Calgary exhibition grounds
Calgary, Alberta.....October 20 - 24
Michael Guertin - Calgary - 285-6898

Northern Alberta Development Council Conference
Grande Prairie Inn
Grande Prairie.....November 4 - 6
Lynne Kemper - Edmonton - 422-4232

(Cont'd)

Coming Agricultural Events (cont'd)

Alberta Horticultural Convention and Trade Show
Capri Centre
Red Deer.....November 12 - 14
David Gourlay - Millet, Alta. - 387-4285

Alberta Sheep Symposium
Banff Springs Hotel
Banff.....November 20 - 21
Cathy Gallivan - Edmonton - 427-5077

Christian Farmers Federation of Alberta - Annual Convention
Nisku Inn
Nisku.....November 26
Gus Polman - Edmonton - 428-6981

1988

Alberta Branch, Canadian Seed Growers - Convention
Banff, Alberta.....January

(Cont'd)

Coming events (cont'd)

Coming Agricultural Events

1. Do you know of any provincial (Alberta), national or international agricultural meetings, conferences or conventions coming in July, August, September 1987, or any events omitted in the attached list? Please state the name of the event.

2. What are the dates? Please be sure to state whether 1987 or 1988.

3. Where is the event being held? Include city or town; hotel and convention centre if known.

4. Please give the name, city or town, and phone number of a contact person for each event listed.

5. This form has been completed by (organization):

Please return this form by June 23, 1987 to:

Print Media Branch
Information Services Division
J.G. O'Donoghue Building
7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T6H 5T6

(Coming Agricultural Events is published four times a year in Agri-News. The next edition will be printed July 6, 1987.)

April 6, 1987
For immediate release

Agri-News Briefs

EROSION WILL REDUCE YIELDS

A little wind and a little rain can be valuable elements helping farmers trying to grow and harvest crops, but given the right conditions they can also create an erosion disaster. During National Soil Conservation Week, April 13 to 17, attention is drawn to the fact that a little erosion can amount to a lot of damage. It is estimated that the erosion of one inch of topsoil can reduce wheat yields by three to four bushels per acre. This is a permanent loss, year after year. Erosion is estimated to cost Albertans about $200 million annually.

WHEAT RECEIPTS DOWN IN 1986

Alberta wheat receipts in 1986 declined $183 million to an estimated $520 million says statistics released by Alberta Agriculture. This 26 per cent drop from 1985 was primarily due to significantly reduced prices and grain quality. Although producers harvested a record 1986 crop, poor delivery opportunities and reduced quality grain pushed August-December 1986 receipts below the comparable period in 1985. Calendar year 1986 wheat deliveries were five per cent below calendar year 1985 deliveries. Also contributing to the decline in wheat receipts were significantly lower 1986/87 initial prices. Canadian Wheat Board payouts for #1 CWRS declined $30 per tonne to $130 Thunder Bay. For more information on farm receipts and expenditures contact Nithi Govindasamy, with Alberta Agriculture's statistics branch, 427-4006.

(Cont'd)

CATTLE RECEIPTS UP SEVEN PER CENT

Assisted by payouts from government programs, total cash receipts from cattle sales in 1986 are estimated to have increased 7.1 per cent to $1.297 billion, says an Alberta Agriculture report. Total cattle and calf slaughter in the province declined by 11 per cent from 1985 while exports of cattle and calves declined by 3.2 per cent. The main feature in the export trade of live cattle in 1986 was the decline in feeder cattle exports and an increase in slaughter cattle exports. For more information on cattle receipts contact Nithi Govindasamy, with Alberta Agriculture's statistics branch, 427-4006.

HEFTY PRICE TAG FOR WESTERN CANADA

It may seem like just so much dirt, but soil loss and damage costs western Canadians nearly $3 million dollars a day in lost revenue. It's like a daily lottery winner taking $2.8 million in prize money and throwing it into the wind or dumping it into a little creek to be washed away. The Science Council of Canada estimates soil degradation costs Western Canadians $1,049,000,000 a year. This estimate could triple within 20 years. Albertans are reminded that National Soil Conservation Week is being observed April 13 to 17. Soil degradation is a comprehensive term for problems such as soil erosion, soil that loses productivity because it loses organic matter, soil that becomes too acid, soil that is put out of production by salinity and soil that won't produce because of compaction.

(Cont'd)

Agri-News Briefs (cont'd)

PRICE SLIDE CONTINUES IN 1987

Grain and oilseed prices are expected to continue to drop in 1987 according to an Alberta Agriculture statistics forecast. Cash receipts from wheat sales in 1987 are expected to drop to $471 million, down from $520 milllion in 1986. Barley receipts in 1987 are forecast to decline 28 per cent to $231 million. There were no final payments for barley except for a total payment of $5.7 million for select barley. Price prospects for 1987 remain grain as the Canadian Wheat Board attempts to compete with heavily subsidized grain from the European Economic Community and the U.S. Canola receipts in 1987 are forecast to decline a further two per cent from last year, to $262 million. Price prospects for canola remain weak even with increased exports to Japan and projected increased deliveries by farmers. For more information on grain and oilseed cash receipts contact Nithi Govindasamy with Alberta Agriculture statistics branch at 427-4006.

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

AGRI-NEWS

April 13, 1987

CANADIANA
MAY - 1 1987

For immediate release

This Week

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

April 13, 1987
For immediate release

Take a good soil sample for best results

Testing soil in the spring is an effective management tool for making fertilizer decisions, but only if the sampling is done properly, says an Alberta Agriculture specialist.

The soil analyses results and the soil test report is only as good as the soil samples, says Len Kryzanowski, a soils specialists with the department's soils and animal nutrition laboratory in Edmonton.

Kryzanowski says a proper soil sample can provide information important to crop production and yield.

"Soil testing will measure the fertility level in soil and help plan a fertilizer program," he says. "It will also help identify reasons for poor crop growth and assist in planning corrective action. The greatest concerns about spring soil testing include the time needed for proper soil sampling and the turnaround time for the analyses and getting the soil test report."

Kryzanowski asks farmers to remember the following points when taking soil samples:

1. Do not sample frozen or waterlogged fields.
2. Size up each field before sampling based on your past observations of variations in crop growth or yield, soil texture, color, slope, degree of erosion, drainage and past management of the field. Avoid unusual areas such as: dead or back furrows, old straw, hay, or manure piles, waterways, saline spots, eroded knolls and old fence rows. Separate samples should be taken from sizable areas where growth is significantly different from the rest of the field.

(Cont'd)

Take a good soil sample for best results (cont'd)

3. Sample between 15 to 20 places at random within the field to obtain a composite soil sample which is representative of the area to be tested. Large areas (greater than 60 acres) tend to have considerable soil variation, so these may need to be divided into smaller sampling units.
4. Depth of soil sampling is very important since crops can utilize nitrogen to a depth of 60 cm (24 inches) or more. Using a proper soil sampling tool, the samples should be taken at intervals of 0-15 cm (0-6 inches), 15-30 cm (6-12 inches) and 30-60 cm (12-24 inches). The subsamples from each depth (such as all the 0-15 cm subsamples from one field) should be mixed together to form a representative sample. The different depths must be kept separate and properly dried. Approximately 500g of soil for each depth sampled is needed for analyses.
5. An information sheet needs to be fully completed noting any unusual problems and a duplicate copy should be kept for your records.

"Soil samples should be sent to a reputable soil testing laboratory," says Kryzanowski. "The Alberta Agriculture Soils and Animal Nutrition Laboratory is the only government laboratory in the province providing soil testing services, but there are also six private laboratories available to farmers as well. The turnaround time with private laboratories is about five days."

A soil test report usually provides information on the available nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and sulphur levels, pH, salt level, sodium, texture and free lime rating.

To obtain a soil sampling tool contact any Alberta Agriculture district office or fertilizer supply company.

For further information on soil sampling contact Kryzanowski at the Soils and Animal Nutrition Laboratory, 9th Floor, O.S. Longman Building, 6909 - 116 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 4P2 or telephone 436-9150, R.I.T.E. number 427-6362.

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Contact: Len Kryzanowski
436-9150

April 13, 1987
For immediate release

Reindeer are home on the range

Farming wildlife may not be everyone's cup of tea, but it will become more widespread if proposed provincial legislation is passed, says a southern Alberta game rancher.

Gordon Sherman, of Cardston, told a recent agricultural conference in Banff he doesn't feel game ranching poses a threat to either livestock producers or sportsmen.

Sherman said he beleives the proposed legislation will pass, opening opportunities for Alberta producers looking for alternate income sources and efficient land uses.

The Cardston-area rancher and commercial pilot, made his comments at the recent Managing Agricultural Technology for Profit Conference. He was among nearly two dozen specialists who spoke to about 150 farm couples attending the 10th annual event organized by Alberta Agriculture.

Sherman who operates a game farm on about 1,000 acres, got involved in the business about eight years ago. His first few buffalo has increased into a herd of about 100 head of cows, plus bulls.

He also has a smaller herd of elk and has built a reindeer herd of about 35 head of cows and 15 head of bulls. He also has a few dollsheep, bighorn sheep, stonesheep and mountain goats.

Sherman told the conference game ranching is a high investment and high return business. He said there isn't much research or production information available on some species, leaving the game rancher to rely on zoologists, biologists, common sense and some trial and error to help build an efficient operation.

Wild meat cannot be legally sold in Alberta, so only the buffalo which is considered a domestic animal, is raised for the retail meat business, he said.

The reindeer are primarily raised and sold for what he terms the "pet market" - going to people wanting to raise a novelty-type animal.

(Cont'd)

Reindeer are home on the range (cont'd)

The elk have a dual market. First the early growth stage of the bull antlers known as velvet is in strong demand in Asian countries as a medicine. Secondly the elk, sheep and goats are also in demand by zoos, other game ranches and hunting reserves in Canada and the U.S.

As far as costs are concerned, Sherman said the game ranch is surrounded by a 14-strand, seven-foot-high, high tensil steel electric fence which carries about 4,600 volts. He estimated the cost at about $4,325 a mile.

He doesn't handle the animals very often during the year - perhaps once or twice for dehorning and pregnancy testing - so elaborate handling facilities are not required. In working with elk, for example, he said he uses dart tranquilizers and anesthetics to reduce stress and discomfort on the animals. He said facilities must be secure enough to restrain some of the more agressive animals.

The buffalo are sold for meat and can bring anywhere from $2.50 a pound when sold through a meat broker to about $3.30 a pound if sold directly to a restaurant.

The elk which he has obtained from zoos and other game ranches mostly in the United States, are worth between $3,000 and $5,000 a head. The velvet, which is the soft marrow extracted from the antler bone, sells for between $75 and $250 a kilogram. He said bulls producing an average of seven kilograms of velvet, can generate between $900 and $1,000 a year.

Sherman says although there is no meat market for elk in Alberta, the carcass is worth between $5.50 and $6.40 a pound in New Zealand where there is a commercial elk meat industry.

The reindeer he has bought directly from the Inuit in northern Canada. On three separate occasions Sherman has arranged for the northern natives to round up reindeer and he has taken a cattleliner from Cardston out onto the frozen Beaufort Sea to collect the animals. It's a 2,400 mile trip from Inuvik to the farm gate.

Reindeer calves will sell for about $3,000 a pair in the fall.

(Cont'd)

Reindeer are home on the range (cont'd)

Although he does not have a commercial flock of the sheep and goats he said they are in demand. Female dallsheep and stonesheep will bring about $2,500, while full curl bighorn rams are worth between $7,000 and $10,000 and bighorn ewes are valued at about $6,000. Mountain goats also sell for about $10,000 U.S.

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Contact: Gordon Sherman
653-2020

Gerd Andres
556-4277

April 13, 1987
For immediate release

Best to put lease in writing

Whether they are good friends or strangers, two people striking an agreement to lease farm land should put the arrangement in writing, says a legal specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

Cal Brandley, an agricultural solicitor with the department in Lethbridge says the best verbal intentions in the world can lead to all kinds of grief and expense if something goes wrong.

Brandley says verbal agreements can work and can be legally binding, but the best bet is to put it in writing.

The long-time department lawyer made his comments at the 10th annual Managing Agricultural Technology for Profit conference in Banff. He was among nearly two dozen experts who spoke to about 150 farm couples during the four-day event organized by Alberta Agriculture.

Brandley said a recent survey showed about 70 per cent of farmers leased a parcel of land in conjunction with their farming operations.

Of the 50.6 million acres farmed or grazed in Alberta, about 29.5 million acres are operated by the owners, while 10.8 million acres are leased to tenants, and 10.3 million acres are government lands leased to tenants.

With about 40 per cent of Alberta farmland under some form of lease or rent, the lawyer said a good lease is important.

Brandley said although many people assume all leases are the same, they should actually be very specific documents reflecting the needs and circumstances of each lease situation.

"The ever increasing complexity of farming today is reflected in the many different types of farm business transactions in existence," he said. "Each new crop introduced in Alberta brings with it a new vocabulary of terms which often have different meanings for those dealing with the crop. Many of the key words in those contracts are so new the courts have not had the opportunity to interpret these words.

(Cont'd)

Best to put lease in writing (cont'd)

"Time spent by the landlord and tenant, prior to entering into lease, clarifying each position will circumvent many possible misunderstandings. Preventative law - get it done right at first - is much cheaper than curative law."

Brandley said if leases are believed to be so straight forward, why do people call his office with a wide range of questions.

Some of the more common questions include:

"My landlord sold his land, can the new purchaser put me off the land? - I still have two more years under the lease with the former landlord."

"I'm renting land on a crop share basis, does the landlord have to help pay for the cost of the weed spray?"

"On a crop share basis, who owns the straw?"

"An oil company is drilling a well on my rented land, do I have to share the compensation with my tenant or can I take that many acres out of the lease?"

"Is there a time period after the expiration of the lease when I must take my share of the crop out of the landlord's granaries?"

"I want to terminate this lease, how much notice is necessary?"

The lawyer said these questions and any other issues that affect the landlord or tenant can all be addressed in the lease agreement.

He said by putting it in writing before the deal is signed both parties know what is involved, know their rights and limitations and both have a document to fall back on if there is a dispute or uncertainty.

Brandley said there are sample leases available which provide farmers with a starting point in developing a lease, but he suggested they have a lawyer check the agreement.

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Contact: Cal Brandley
381-5131

April 13, 1987
For immediate release

Production cutbacks in agriculture future

Agriculture will undergo more changes in the next 10 years than it has in all the past century and producers had better be ready, says an Ontario corporate executive.

John Oliver, vice-president of Eli Lilly Canada Inc. says by the mid-1990's agriculture, as we know it today, will be revolutionized.

Oliver, who is responsible for Elanco Products of Scarborough, a manufacturer of chemicals and animal health products, told a recent agricultural conference in Banff there are several major influences just breaking on the agricultural horizon. Within a decade these influences will be fully upon the industry upsetting many of the traditional patterns.

Oliver said issues such as an aging population, biotechnology, free trade and national and international politics will change how and what food is grown.

In the process he said Canada could lose about one quarter of its farming population and land prices will continue to fall.

He said although there are some difficult times ahead he challenged producers to meet the changes head on. He said they should fight to change unrealistic government policies and push for improved regional representation in Ottawa. He said some changes can be turned into opportunities.

Oliver was one of nearly two dozen speakers to address the 10th annual Managing Agricultural Technology for Profit Conference organized by Alberta Agriculture.

"Agriculture is in for some extremely tough times and unlike similar situations in the past where we have had a downturn in commodity prices in one sector offset by an upturn in the other, today the winds that are blowing on the horizon carry, a message of permanent downsizing," he said.

(Cont')

Production cutbacks in agriculture future (cont'd)

We will see"...downsizing of the food production machine as we have traditionally known it. How we handle that retrenchment and how we deal with the fallout, will be a test of political will and a test of maturity. It has major social implications far beyond what he have come to expect and accept as the traditional way of life on the farm."

Oliver blamed national and international politics for much of the agricultural woes. He said farming today is 95 per cent politics and five per cent economics and science.

He said there has been a lack of direction as well as medling in the normal supply and demand cycle,

There is a"...lack of political will in Canada today and an unwillingness to look at the long term issues squarely and realistically," he said. "In other words, our strategy continues to be...play for the short term at the expense of our long term future."

The company vice-president said there are several major issues which will have the most affect on agriculture in the next decade.

The aging population, which brings about a change in eating habits will be one of the most profound he said. As the "baby boomers" move into their 50s and 60s they will consume less food and their preference will change from red meat to white meat.

He said while Canada's population will hold steady, there will be a continuing high birth rate in undeveloped countries. But these countries, showing success in the "green revolution", will also become more sufficient in their own food production.

"The result is a scenario which is scary for Canadian producers," he said.

Biotechnology and genetic engineering will dramatically alter the way people farm, he said. He said it was a double-edged sword which will probably put some producers out of business, while at the same time creating opportunities for other farmers and for agricultural support industries.

"From the point of view of Canadian agriculture and Alberta in particular, we must not be bystanders, we must participate in this new science. We can't allow this technology to come into Canada, imported in finished form as food product."

(Cont'd)

Production cutbacks in agriculture future (cont'd)

Oliver said the U.S. Farm Policy is a confused piece of legislation that makes future predictions difficult. He said the net result is an aggressive and protectionist type attitude by the United States as it attempts to regain lost markets and expand into new areas.

"The U.S. farm program today is really confused and unclear. This uncertainly and potential violent over-reaction reinforces the need for Canada to move forward in the free trade negotiations and find a formula for dealing with the trade irritants between our two countries."

On the national scene, Oliver told the conference if the West is going to have a voice in Canadian politics and agricultural policies it must push for an elected senate.

He said because Eastern Canada has the population base it drives the national political agenda now...and it is only going to get worse.

"...the only solution I believe can restore political balance of some sort, rectify some of the disparity of population is an elected senate," he said. "To me the Triple E Senate proposals - elected, equal and effective - have to be a centerpiece of Western Canadian political strategy and must be supported by the resource based sectors of our economy, and agriculture in particular, if we are to regain a voice in national affairs for this vital industry."

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Contact: Gerd Andres
556-4277

April 13, 1987
For immediate release

Rotational grazing provides top returns

An intensive rotational grazing system has produced some "terrific" results for one Alberta beef producer who says his net return on a quarter section is nearly $275 per acre.

Larry Steeves, a cattleman from Meeting Creek, a community half way between Camrose and Stettler, told a recent agriculture conference in Banff, that sufficient cattle numbers and good management are essential to maximizing returns.

Steeves made his comments at the 10th annual Managing Agricultural Technology for Profit Conference. The four-day event, sponsored by Alberta Agriculture was attended by about 150 farm couples from across Alberta.

The farmer said he had been a long-time believer that grain provides the best economic return from his Class 2 land. But after seeing the results of four years of rotational grazing, he has new faith in the value of pasture.

Steeves began his rotational grazing project in 1983, fencing off a 155 acre quarter section into eight pastures. The land was divided like a pie, with all pastures joining in a common central area where stock water was available.

The area was seeded to a mixture of alfalfa, brome and timothy, although over the years the ratio of alfalfa has declined.

Considered a research project, he received funds from the Farming for the Future Program to assist with development costs.

Although the number of yearling steers using the pasture has increased each year, 1986 produced the best results, he told the conference.

The final figures last fall showed the pasture produced 365 pounds of beef per acre and an average daily gain of 2.4 pounds. Net return was $197.09 per head or $273.38 per acre.

(Cont'd)

Rotational grazing provides top returns (cont'd)

The yearlings were rotated through all eight pastures during the 1986 season, hitting each pasture three to five times between May and September for three to four days at a time.

"We paid 84 cents per pound for the steers, put them up for tender the second week of September and received 87.35 cents per pound with an average weight of 946 pounds," he said. "This gave 365 pounds of beef per acre and an average daily gain of 2.4 pounds."

Steeves said in the first year or two he did lose some steers due to bloat, but after providing free choice disodium phosphate along with salt and trace minerals, bloat problems were eliminated.

He told the meeting it is important to have enough cattle available to meet the peak production period of the pasture. He said he began the project in 1983 using 155 head and has gradually increased that to 216 animals.

Steeves said it is important to graze each pasture when the forage reaches a maximum nutritional level. He said if it passes its prime and begins to mature, protein levels drop.

Rainfall over the grazing season, May to September has ranged from a high of 12.77 inches in 1983 to a low of 7.25 inches in 1986.

His costs in 1986, which included buying the steers, operating expenses and capital costs were pegged at $135,287, while income amounted to $177,661 for a net return of $42,374 from the project.

Contact: Larry Steeves
877-2318

Gerd Andres
556-4277

April 13, 1987
For immediate release

Brand inspection fees increased

For the first time in more than 20 years, brand inspection fees in Alberta have been increased, keeping pace with the cost of similar services in other provinces.

C.W. Herbert, acting head of Alberta Agriculture's regulatory services branch, says livestock brand inspection fees will increase from 20 cents to 50 cents per head.

There will be a minimum inspection fee of $5, unless the inspection takes place at a market, country sale or feedlot.

The yearly horse permit (a permit which can be bought by anyone transporting a horse in Alberta) goes from $1 to $2 per year.

Herbert says the fee increases, which went into effect April 1, are part of the provincial government's policy of recovering costs for services, while at the same time maintaining an essential level of service to the livestock industry.

"Brand inspection fees have not been increased since 1965 in Alberta and these new levels will bring them in line with other western provinces," he says.

Alberta has an extensive system of livestock brand registration and brand inspection service. This program registers brands to individuals or companies and that brand is applied to livestock owned by them for indentification. This brand is a permanent mark identifying livestock through the production/marketing cycle.

"The brand is the most efficient method of identifying livestock and the system of inspection that Alberta has in place gives livestock owners very good protection against theft of animals and in recovering livestock that has strayed," says Herbert.

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Contact: C.W. Herbert
427-5090

April 13, 1987
For immediate release

Winter was like spring

The normal spring weather of March was not much different from the unusually mild weather of the winter, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

Peter Dzikowski, agricultural weather resource specialist in Edmonton, says the average temperature for March, at many locations in Alberta, was about the same as reported in December, January and February. Although there were large swings in daily values, and differences north to south, the average monthly temperatures at any one location were pretty similar for the past four months.

In northern Alberta, early March weather was cold, with maximum temperature values in the minus teens. In contrast, at the same time southern Alberta weather was warm with maximum values in the plus teens. Later in March the weather was more uniform across Alberta and temperatures were more spring-like. Average monthly temperatures for March were about 1 C below normal in northern Alberta, and about 3 C above normal in central and southern Alberta.

LOCATION	AVG. TEMP.	DEPARTURE FROM NORMAL
Grande Prairie	-8.5°C	-1.3°C (below normal)
Lloydminster	-5.2°C	2.7°C (above normal)
Red Deer	-3.0°C	3.2°C (above normal)
Medicine Hat	1.5°C	4.3°C (above normal)

"March precipitation was generally above normal," says Dzikowski. "Precipitation amounts varied, from 54.2 mm at High Level, almost two and a half times the normal amount for March, to 9.5 mm at Edson, about half the normal amount for the month. Most locations reported about 20 to 35 mm of precipitation. This is enough to replenish surface soil moisture, but not enough to delay spring field work."

For more information, contact Peter Dzikowski at the Conservation and Development Branch in Edmonton, 422-4385.

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Contact: Peter Dzikowski - 422-4385

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

April 13, 1987
For immediate release

Agri-News Briefs

CROPS DISPLAY PLANNED IN 1987

Plans are already being made for the 1987 version of the Crops of Alberta display at the Alberta Agriculture headquarters in Edmonton. The one-acre display plot, just south of the front door of the J.G. O'Donoghue Building at 7000 - 113 Street provides a public showcase of not only the variety but the history of agricultural crops that have been grown over the years. Lorna Stephen, who is co-ordinating this year's display says the 1987 theme will be "Through the Decades". Varieties from most decades of 1900's will be shown, depending on the availability of seed. Some of the more unusual crops to be grown are Jerusalem artichokes, sorghum, crambe, wrinkled pea, black lentils, forage kale, mung beans and Indian corn. This year, in co-operation with the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre, demonstrations of mulching and tunneling will be part of the plots. If you have any suggestions for the Crops of Alberta display contact Lorna Stephen at the crop protection branch in Edmonton, at 427-5334.

ENVIRONMENT WEEK IN MAY

Albertans are urged to lend their support and participate in Environment Week '87 being observed May 31 to June 7. Organized by the Environment Week Association of Alberta, the objective of the week is to promote environmental information and programs and raise public awareness of environmental concerns in their area. Individuals, groups, community associations, municipalities and educational institutions are urged to participate with their own programs during the designated week. Through meetings, contests, clean-up programs, recycling projects, tours and other educational projects, all interested parties can get involved. For more information or for assistance in organizing a project contact Janet Austin or Peggie Graham in Edmonton at 427-6267.

(Cont'd)

Agri-News Briefs

LEGAL COMPANY EXPANDS ALFALFA OPERATION

A north-central Alberta alfalfa processing plant will use about $240,000 in government assistance as part of a major expansion project. Legal Alfalfa Products Ltd., of Legal, a community just north of Edmonton will receive funds under the Canada/Alberta Agricultural Processing and Marketing Agreement. The money will be part of an $800,000 expansion project which will enable the company to begin producing compressed alfalfa maxi-cubes in Legal in addition to the conventional alfalfa cubes. Geared to expand the firm's export markets in Japan, the project is expected to generate sales of almost $4 million over a three-year period and create about 12 jobs. The announcement of the project was made jointly by Peter Elzinga, Alberta's Minister of Agriculture and Bernard Valcourt, federal Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism). For more information contact Ron Selin at 420-2944 in Edmonton.

TOP LAMB SALE IN JUNE

Some of the top rams in Alberta will be on the auction bloc in Olds in June for the 13th annual Alberta Ram Test Station Sale. Offered for sale will be the outstanding young rams that complete the test program just prior to the June 27 event. Last year 204 lambs from 28 breeders were entered on test. The top 51 rams were sold for an average price of $416, while the top price of the day was $950. For more information on the sale contact John Knapp, Alberta Agriculture sheep specialist in Airdrie at 948-8517.

(Cont'd)

Ari-News Briefs (cont'd)

BABY BOOMERS GETTING OLDER

If you are a baby boomer you're getting older and by the turn of a century, according to one agricultural specialist, you'll be part of the graying majority that will be reshaping food production patterns. John Oliver, vice-president of Eli Lilly Canada Inc. told a recent agriculture conference that as the baby boomers get into their 40s, 50s and 60s they will eat less and eat different foods. By the year 2001, 46 per cent of the population will be over 40 compared to 36 per cent today. By 1996, just 10 years from now, nearly 7.6 million Canadians, almost one-third of the population will be over 50 years of age - a 50 per cent increase in two decades. Nearly 3.6 million of this 7.6 million, or almost half will be 65 years or older. This population shift means markets for red meats in the developed world will diminish greatly and with it the need for abundant feed grains.

ELECTION CALL FOR ONTARIO?

At least one agricultural industry specialist expects Ontario voters will go the polls in June, giving the provincial government a new mandate and incentive to support a Canada/U.S. Free Trade Agreement. John Oliver, vice-president of Eli Lilly Canada Inc. told an agriculture conference in Banff he believes the Ontario Liberal government lead by David Peterson has been opposing free trade talks because bashing the federal government is politically popular. "I believe the Peterson government, already on record as having grave reservations about such an agreement (free trade), will likely call a provincial election for the third week of June. With a large majority in his pocket for a four year security period ahead of him, Premier Peterson will, over the summer, have a change of heart and either be neutral on freer trade or maybe even positive," said Oliver. "With almost solid support from the provinces...Prime Minister Mulroney, will move to sign the agreement in principle in early October." Oliver said the free trade agreement will be good for both Canada and agriculture.

AGRI-NEWS

April 20, 1987

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For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

April 20, 1987
For immediate release

Study shows irrigation can benefit Peace region farmers

Irrigation can take the peaks and valleys out of crop production in the Peace River region, but several factors must be in place before farmers charge ahead with a project, says a recent report prepared by Alberta Agriculture.

The study, completed by a provincial irrigation economist, says irrigation is feasible throughout the northwest region, but suitable soil, adequate water and low cost energy are key to making a successful project.

Tony Van Deurzen, a specialist with the department's economic services division in Lethbridge, says it is worth while for farmers to do some ground work before laying out cash for an irrigation system. He says the recently completed report will help farmers make decisions.

"The application of water to crops in northern areas of the province is different from irrigation in the perennial water-deficient areas of southern Alberta, because of at least two factors," says Van Deurzen.

"First, there is greater variation in the north in surface moisture shortages at seeding time, and second, the amount of average annual water deficit is considerably less."

The 82-page report points out that while climatic factors in the Peace limit the range of crops for intensive agriculture, the economics of irrigation (as a supplementary water source) generally improves going from the south Peace to the north Peace, but are site specific.

Irrigation projects are not widespread through the Peace region. Several are in use for vegetable production and market gardens, but use for barley, wheat, canola and alfalfa production is limited.

Van Deurzen predicts most irrigation projects in the Peace would be relatively small - between 100 and 200 acres - compared to projects in southern Alberta.

He says the role of irrigation in the Peace is to act as a backup or supplementary water supply for crop production when Mother Nature fails to come through.

(Cont'd)

Capital costs for development are at least equal to or exceed those in the established southern irrigation districts, says the report. In many cases with conventional water elevations, the distance of the field from the water source is the deciding factor in assessing the economic viability of the project.

"Availability of low cost energy is also an important factor in decision making," says Van Deurzen. "The only exceptions are the higher valued market garden crops which can be grown along rivers and watered with hand-move systems. Because of elevation and proximity to the water supply these projects require low operating and capital investment costs."

The study says producers should stay away from irrigation projects which require highcost lift stations to move water.

"High-lift water elevating schemes, those involving lifts of 91 metres or greater, entail exceedingly high capital and operating costs," says the specialist. "Projects of this type are currently uneconomical for any location and cropping pattern in the region.

"However, 25 and 50-metre lifts are economically viable for most crop rotations in the Peace River - Fort Vermillion area, where returns from irrigation are sufficient to cover total annual water application costs."

Van Deuzen says irrigation schemes in this part of the region are more likely to be feasible as the height of the river bank decreases as you move northward.

The report says before a producer invests in an irrigation project he should consider several criteria. He should determine if the soil is suitable for irrigation, whether the water is of good quality and whether the supply is adequate and sufficiently secure to meet crop production needs.

Other aspects to consider are cropping pattern, higher capital investment in equipment, increased operating funds, and cash flow implications due to greater input costs.

(Cont'd)

Study shows irrigation can benefit Peace region farmers (cont'd)

"Producers must also remember that more intensive use of labor and management skills are required, " says Van Deurzen. "And the farmer must ask himself if irrigation will fit in with the total farming operation. How do the potential returns from water application compare to alternative investments in extensive farming or the expansion or addition of other farm enterprises?"

The specialist says irrigation does have a role in the Peace River although individual circumstances must be considered.

For more details or a copy of the report "Small Irrigation Project Development in the Peace River Region of Alberta", contact the economic services division of Alberta Agriculture in Edmonton, at 7000 - 113 Street, or George Monner, regional farm economist at the department's Fairview office, 835-2291.

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Contact: George Monner
835-2291

April 20, 1987
For immediate release

Cattlemen honored with performance awards

Two Alberta cattlemen have been honored for their contributions to improving the quality of beef cattle in the province.

John Stewart-Smith of Cochrane and Hans Ulrich of Claresholm have been presented with the first Alberta Beef Cattle Performance Awards, which recognize producer excellence in, and dedication to, beef cattle performance testing.

The two farmers were selected from a field of 21 nominations from across the province. The awards were announced at the Ellerslie Bull Test Station Sale in Edmonton, April 16.

The awards, one for a purebred producer and the other for a commercial beef producer are sponsored by the Alberta Beef Cattle Performance Test Advisory Committee and Alberta Agriculture.

Chuck Huedepohl, assistant livestock supervisor with Alberta Agriculture, says the selection committee, made up of scientific and government representatives as well as producers, had a difficult time selecting winners.

"We were pleased with the number of nominations we received and it is obvious from the submissions that there are many producers who are firm believers in the value of performance testing in their beef herds," said Huedepohl. "The selection committee had a hard time selecting only two people to be honored with this first award."

Stewart-Smith, winner of the commercial cattle performance award, is "one of the founders and now manager of Beefbooster Cattle Ltd., and has played a leadership role in many areas of improving the performance of Alberta beef cattle," says the nomination.

"One of John's contributions is the formation of an organizational framework which allows a number of independently owned and operated cattle herds to form a large gene pool from which genetically superior seedstock can be bred and selected under rigid guidelines.

(Cont'd)

Cattlemen honored with performance awards (cont'd)

"John has also been a leader in developing and applying evaluation criteria used in the selection of seedstock with a goal toward developing bulls that are reproductively and structurally superior as well as genetically superior," the submission said.

Using computer analysis to assist in the seedstock selection process, rather than develop a "superbreed", Stewart-Smith "has built on the concept of developing a variety of strains, each with a particular purpose in a breeding program to maximize total beef production."

He has also been active in marketing performance tested seedstock.

Ulrich, winner of the purebred performance award, has been active in improving the quality of Hereford cattle in Alberta.

The Claresholm area farmer "feels a lot of progress has been made within his own herd by using offspring from their top-producing females," says the nomination. "Through performance records, Ulrich feels he is able to measure and record all of the concrete traits that are of economic value to him.

Ulrich was one of the driving forces behind the development and implementation of the Canadian Hereford Association's Total Herd Evaluation (T.H.E.) Program. This program is a complete evaluation record system, flexible enough to meet the needs of the most sophisticated record-keeping breeders or those who want to keep only the basics.

Described as a "dedicated performance enthusiast", Ulrich was the Alberta Hereford Association's representative on the Alberta Beef Cattle Performance Test Advisory Committee for several years. He was also Alberta's producer representative to the National Advisory Board for Beef Cattle Improvement.

He left these positions when named to the Canadian Hereford Association's board of directors and became involved in the T.H.E. program.

Each of the award winners will receive a gate sign and a wall plaque acknowledging their achievements.

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Contact: Chuck Heudepohl
427-5085

April 21, 1987
For immediate release

Hussar speaker wins provincial 4-H award

A senior 4-H member with an interest in senior citizens and wildlife is the winner of the 1987 Alberta 4-H Public Speaking Finals.

Colleen Pentelchuk of Hussar, 90 kilometres east of Calgary, won first place over 12 other 4-H competitors during judging at the Northlands Agricom in Edmonton, recently. She has been involved in sewing and light horse 4-H clubs for the past eight years.

Placing second in the competition was Cody Church of the Calgary area while third went to a Wainwright area member, Trish Ritthaler of Hardisty.

Top speakers from left, Colleen Pentelchuk, Cody Church, Trish Ritthaler

Based on the general topic, "People need each other", competitors were given three specific topics to choose from and had one hour to prepare a four to six minute speech. They also gave an impromptu speech, composed and presented on the spot.

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Contact: Bob Coe
422-4444

April 20, 1987
For Immediate release

Beware! - Tough grain in storage

Grain producers should check storage bins for tough or damp grain that could lead to spoilage if not properly handled.

A specialist with Alberta Agriculture says there aren't too many options in dealing with tough grain, but if it isn't conditioned or marketed early, the farmer could face a total loss.

"With the poor harvest conditions last fall, a lot of grain was harvested at moisture contents above dry," says Marshall Eliason, a farm machinery engineer with the department in Edmonton. "While many producers were able to dry a portion of the crop, much remains in storage at moisture contents above dry.

"Spoilage of grain in storage is dependent on both grain temperature and moisture content. As the outside temperature warms, it is imperative that bins of tough or damp grain be monitored closely. Hot spots can be difficult to detect and can spread quickly. Tough or damp grain has to be either conditioned or marketed. Once spoilage starts, it's often too late to do either."

Tough or damp feed grains may be marketed through local feeders with little or no discount, says the engineer. Most grains delivered through the elevator system, however, have to be dry. Mixing tough or damp crops with over-dry crops can be feasible. Some elevator managers will accept mixed moisture contents provided that the overall final moisture content is close to dry.

More likely, however, tough or damp crops will have to be dried. Natural air drying can be used if a bin is equipped with perforated flooring and a fan.

Spring drying should begin in April and once started, fans should run continuously until the drying front is completely through the grain. Monitoring the bin throughout the drying process is a must to ensure optimum quality.

(Cont'd)

Beware! - Tough grain in storage (cont'd)

Supplemental heat can be effectively used in conjunction with natural air drying. Heat should only be used during periods of high relative humidity and add only enough heat to raise the air temperature a few degrees.

"If the crop has to be marketed immediately or if heating has started, heated air drying is the quickest and easiest way to dry," says Eliason. "Custom rates start at about $0.15 per bushel but depend on the amount of conditioning required.

"For those producers with heated air dryers, energy costs for spring time heated air drying typically range from $.01 to $.05 per bushel. Energy costs for natural air drying are about the same and typically range from $.01 to $.06 per bushel depending on the weather and the amount of conditioning required.

The engineer says storage of damp or tough grain requires considerable care and management.

"Poor grain prices have forced producers to watch costs closely," he says. "No one, however, can afford the cost of spoilage."

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Contact: Marshall Eliason
427-2181

April 20, 1987
For immediate release

Changes made to market garden grant program

"Significant" changes have been made to a provincial grant program that can help market gardeners in Alberta establish or expand their operations.

Lloyd Hausher, a specialist with Alberta Agriculture in Brooks, says the major changes to the 1987 Alberta Market Garden Development Grant (MGDG) program involve machinery, acreage requirements and type of crops eligible.

The grant was established several years ago to provide assistance to market gardeners. These are producers who grow vegetables and small fruit for direct sale to consumers either at the farm gate or at farmers' markets.

Hausher, the fruit crops specialist at the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center, says the 1987 program will pay up to 50 per cent of the cost of specified equipment to a maximum payment of $750 per applicant.

The grant program administrator says this is the first time equipment has specifically been covered under MGDG. A list of the eligible equipment is available with application forms.

"In addition to the required equipment purchase, a market gardener must grow and market all produce from a minimum of three acres (1.22 hectares) of which not more than one-half can be sweet corn," says Hausher.

"Except for potatoes, the grant covers all vegetable crops commonly grown for fresh market, as well as strawberry, raspberry and saskatoon plantings that are bearing fruit. The vegetables and fruit must be grown under normally acceptable cultural practices and must be sold through a recognized marketing channel."

A market gardener is entitled to a grant for maximum of two years. Anyone who has already received two years of grant under the program is not eligible.

(Cont'd)

Changes made to market gardener grant program (cont'd)

Vegetable and fruit growers who are eligible for the grant must file an application by July 1 with the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center at Brooks.

For more information or application forms on the Market Garden Development Program contact any Alberta Agriculture district office; the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center, Bag Service 200, Brooks, Alberta, T0J 0J0; or the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre, R.R. 6, Edmonton, Alberta T5B 4K3.

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Contact: Lloyd Hausher
362-3391

April 20, 1987
For immediate release

New weather forecast format

Agricultural weather forecasts have a new format now, says a weather specialist with Alberta Agriculture in Edmonton.

Peter Dzikowski, agricultural weather resource specialist, says that Environment Canada is now issuing weather forecasts in a new format for rural areas. These new region forecasts contain additional information on windspeed and direction, precipitation amount, humidity, and starting about June 1, a drying index.

"There used to be two forecasts issued, a public forecast and an agricultural forecast, which contained only the additional information," says Dzikowski. "These two have now been combined into one forecast format for rural areas. Major urban centres still receive just the public forecast.

"If you are not getting information on windspeed and direction, or humidity and after June 1st, the drying conditions, then you are not getting all the agricultural weather forecast information available. Call your local radio station and request that they read the entire weather forecast for your region."

For additional information, contact Peter Dzikowski at 422-4385.

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Contact: Peter Dzikowski
422-4385

April 20, 1987
For immediate release

Agri-News Briefs

CALENDARS AVAILABLE AT FARMERS' MARKETS

Many of the 115 Farmers' Markets in Alberta will be soon open for business, providing a full line of bedding out plants for the home gardener. Lorraine Rea, co-ordinator of the Farmers' Market Program with Alberta Agriculture in Edmonton, says consumers should find the markets a good place to shop through May and June. "While at your favorite Farmers' Market, ask for the new 1987-88 Farmers' Market Calendar - dated May 1, 1987 to April 30, 1988," says Rea. "It provides market dates, special events, recipes and helpful hints for gardening and baking. Original art work in the calendar is a special feature." This will be the ninth year for the calendar. For more information on Farmers' Markets contact Lorraine Rea or Shirene Gronberg at 427-7366.

DAMPING-OFF CAN AFFECT SEEDLINGS

Gardeners trying to establish vegetables from seeds may run into a common disease call damping-off. The disease is caused by various soil-borne fungi. Seeds infected in the early stages of germination fail to sprout while other seedlings may be killed before they emerge. Emerged seedings may topple over and die just after they appear. Stems at the soil line are generally water soaked, shrivelled and discolored. Alberta Agriculture specialists says because soil can carry pathogens which incite root rot and damping-off, it is important to use sterile soil and sanitized equipment for starting transplants. It is better to sow too thin rather than too thick, as spindly seedlings resulting from competition make poor transplants, and close spacing results in greater root contact and greater possiblity of root disease transmission. Prolonged periods of soil wetness and poor soil drainage favor disease development. Transplants should be watered carefully and only well drained soil used. For more information on damping-off and other diseases contact Marilyn Dykstra at the Alberta Special Crops and Horticultural Research Center in Brooks at 362-3391.

(Cont'd)

Agri-News briefs (Cont'd)

FORMER D.A. HONORED

A long time Alberta Agriculture district agriculturist has been honored by the Medicine Hat Exhibition and Stampede board of directors. Jack Anderson, who served as a DA with the department in Medicine Hat from 1944 to 1974 has had a new livestock building at the exhibition grounds named in his honor. On the recommendation of the board's livestock committee, the building will be known as the Jack Anderson Livestock Pavilion. Anderson was born and raised in the Wardlow area northeast of Brooks. After graduating from the University of Alberta, he worked for the federal government for six years before joining the department as the district agriculturist in Medicine Hat in 1944. During his 30 year career he is credited with many accomplishments in providing extension service to producers and working with young people in the 4-H program.

PLENTY OF DAIRY PRODUCTS

There is a surplus of dairy products in the world and this continues to hold international prices down, according to a market report prepared by Alberta Agriculture. Market analyst Alan Dooley says although the European Economic Community is taking steps to control milk production, "dairy product surpluses will continue to overhang the market". In Alberta milk and cream production between August and January amounted to 10.3 million kilograms of butterfat, 3.4 per cent above production for the same period in the 1985-86 dairy year. Production of milk, at 9.9 million kilograms was up 4.4 per cent, while cream production fell by 10.6 per cent, a trend which has been ongoing for several years. Dooley says the price farmers receive now for Class 1 milk is the lowest in Canada, and he doesn't expect any price change before the end of the dairy year. According to Statistics Canada, dairy cow and heifer numbers in Alberta have increased from 193,000 head to 195,000 head. For more information on the dairy situation and outlook contact Alan Dooley at 427-5382.

(Cont'd)

Agri-News Briefs (cont'd)

A MEGA-OMELET

There were nearly two million laying hens in Alberta last year according to the 1985-86 Alberta Agriculture annual report. The document which highlights areas of agriculture production, shows that 1,931,600 layers produced 38,124,000 dozen eggs, an increase of 10.5 per cent from the year before. This increase reflected the change in rate of lay from 19 to 21 dozen for hens in regulated flocks. In spite of this production, eggs were still brought into the province to meet market demand. A yearly total of 8,960,000 dozen or 172,000 dozen eggs a week was brought into the province.

PROGRAMS WERE OF VALUE

Drought created tough conditions for Alberta livestock producers in the past couple of seasons, prompting action by the provincial government. According to Alberta Agriculture's 1985-86 annual report two programs were implemented that provided assistance to 31,576 producers. The Canada-Alberta livestock drought assistance program was jointly funded by the federal and provincial governments. A total of $42.1 million was paid to producers in the 1985-86 fiscal year under the intitial part of the program. In addition, a total of $49 million was paid to producers in the 1985-86 fiscal year under the initial part of the Alberta livestock assistance program. The final phase of these programs in the 1986-87 fiscal year will result in an estimated additional $40 million in assistance.

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121

AGRI-NEWS

April 27, 1987

MAY 19

For immediate release

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Print Media Branch

Phone: (403) 427-2121

April 27, 1987
For immediate release

B.C. cattle may carry bacteria

Alberta dairymen and cattle producers should take precaution with livestock brought in from southern and central British Columbia, following outbreak of a bacteria west of the Rockies that can cause serious production losses.

Although there is no need for panic, Dr. Matt Schoonderwoerd, a veterinary pathologist with Alberta Agriculture says this particular strain of bacteria known as Salmonella dublin could be damaging to Alberta calf production if it gains a foothold in the province.

While B.C. has identified 19 farms infected with the bacteria in 1986, there has been only one reported case in Alberta. This involved calves which were brought in from the Fraser Valley area.

Schoonderwoerd says the bacteria is not to be taken lightly. It can kill calves, cause mature cows to abort and is also a threat to humans.

He says because there is no simple cure for the disease the best approach is prevention.

Avoid buying the problem is the best bet, but if a producer does bring in dairy cattle from B.C. keep them in isolation on the farm for about two weeks to see if any signs of the disease appear.

Keep livestock facilities as clean as possible - the bacteria doesn't like sanitation.

If a calf does die suddenly a postmortem examination should be performed by the local veterinarian or provincial diagnostic laboratory to determine the cause of death.

If Salmonella dublin is diagnosed, a strict sanitation program is essential to stop the bacteria from spreading.

There are many kinds of salmonella bacteria, but the dublin strain causes severe infection in calves. It causes diarrhea, septicemia, abortions and death.

(Cont'd)

B.C. cattle may carry bacteria (cont'd)

Schoonderwoerd says because it is a relatively new disease in Alberta, producers running into the problem might first assume a calf is suffering from a common type of scours. However, he says infected animals will generally not respond to routine scour medication and may die suddenly.

Salmonella dublin bacteria is both stubborn and tricky to deal with.

Schoonderwoerd says strict sanitation of infected areas is the best way to stop the spread of bacteria, which can survive in manure for up to a year.

He says it can be hard to detect because the disease can be carried by older animals that function normally and show no signs of sickness.

"A good strong animal can be a carrier and yet give a negative test result," says Schoonderwoerd. "The disease is often activated by stress caused by such things as trucking, or nutritional stress, or by the stress involved in calving.

"You could have an animal that tests negative in British Columbia, but by the time you haul it into Alberta, she could have developed a full blown case of salmonella."

The department specialist says although mainly dairy cattle have been affected to date, the disease is not selective. He says the disease may also affect beef cattle.

In mature animals, Salmonella dublin can locate in the udder and be shed in the milk.

Schoonderwoerd says consumers using pasteurized milk need not be concerned because all bacteria have been killed. However farmers and others who drink raw milk run the risk of getting the infection.

Infection in humans is most serious in the very young and the elderly as well as those whose immune systems are weakened. People who already have some type of infection or are taking oral antibiotics also are more susceptible.

For more information on Salmonella dublin contact Dr. Matt Schoonderwoerd, or Dr. Bill Stone at Alberta Agriculture Animal Health Division, O.S. Longman Building, 6906 - 116 Street, Edmonton, T6H 4P2 or call 436-8904 or 436-9343.

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Contact: Dr. Matt Schoonderwoerd - 436-8904

April 27, 1987
For immediate release

Soil moisture conditions good for planting

Soil moisture conditions across most of Alberta appear good for crop production this spring, says a water management specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

Moisture on fallow land is high in all regions, says Dick Heywood, a specialist with the conservation and development branch in Lethbridge. Conditions on stubble land are also positive in most regions with the exception of the Peace River region and a small portion of east central Alberta.

The difference between fallow and stubble land in these areas is 50 - 75 cm of water. In the remainder of the province, the difference is much less.

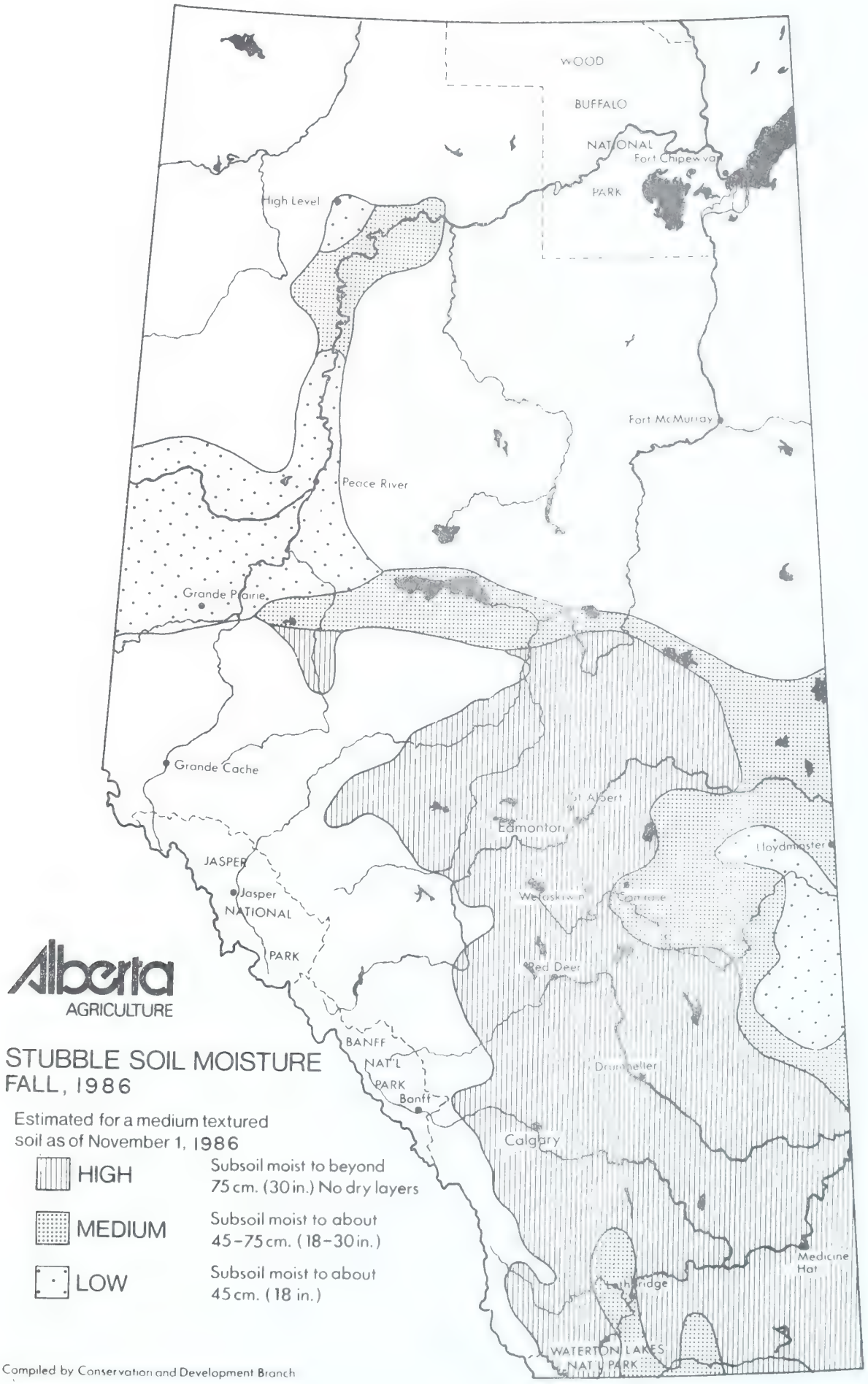
Referring to the provincial soil moisture map, Heywood says the pattern has not altered except the moisture level on medium soil in southwestern Alberta now has high soil moisture. Other areas of noticeable improvement are in the northern Peace and Lloydminster areas.

"In the soil water storage period of 1986-1987 (September 1 - April 30), precipitation was above average in most areas south of Edmonton, but below average in most areas north of Edmonton (except the north Peace)," he says. "A large part of this precipitation was early fall rainfall which was efficiently stored.

"In southern regions, the snow melt and early spring precipitation have also been stored and have more than replaced losses that occurred during the warm and dry December, January and early February period."

The specialist says pasture soil moisture conditions are normal or above normal with the exception of areas north and east of Edmonton and likely much of the Peace River area.

(Cont'd)


WOOD
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High Level
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Jasper
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Red Deer
BANFF
NAT'L
PARK
Banff
Calgary
Drumheller
Medicine
Hat
WATERTON LAKES
NAT'L PARK
Alberta
AGRICULTURE
STUBBLE SOIL MOISTURE
FALL, 1986
Estimated for a medium textured
soil as of November 1, 1986
HIGH
Subsoil moist to beyond
75 cm. (30 in.) No dry layers
MEDIUM
Subsoil moist to about
45–75 cm. (18–30 in.)
LOW
Subsoil moist to about
45 cm. (18 in.)
Compiled by Conservation and Development Branch

Soil moisture conditions good for planting (cont'd)

Moisture variation in fields results from differences in precipitation and other factors, he says. These factors include soil texture and structure, past management, stubble conditions and height, and melt period conditions.

Heywood says the stubble moisture map prepared by the department is not field specific and each field should be checked for moisture before making cropping decisions.

For further information, contact Heywood at 381-5154, Lethbridge.

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Contact: R.T. Heywood
381-5154

April 27, 1987
For immediate release

Farm Weather Line to start May 1

Alberta producers will again be able to telephone the Farm Weather Line starting May 1, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

Peter Dzikowski, agricultural weather resource specialist in Edmonton, says Alberta Agriculture and Environment Canada's Atmospheric Environment Service will again be cooperating to provide easy access to up-to-date agricultural weather forecasts.

The Farm Weather Line provides a recorded message available 24 hours a day, from May 1 to October 31.

The service will operate the same as last year in the following four centres:

Grande Prairie	539-7654
Edmonton	468-9196
Calgary	295-1003
Lethbridge	328-RAIN (7246).

The lines are not toll-free and the caller will be billed the normal long distance charge if calling from outside the local calling area.

Forecasts specific to each region will be updated at 5:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 4:30 p.m., and 9:30 p.m.

The Farm Weather Line proved to be a popular service last year, with almost 75,000 calls recorded from May 1 to October 31.

For more information contact Peter Dzikowski at 422-4385.

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Contact: Peter Dzikowski
422-4385

April 27, 1987
For immediate release

Updated dairy production course material available

Alberta Agriculture's newly revised home study course, covering nearly every aspect of how to be a dairy farmer, is now available to producers.

The three-year-old Alberta Dairy Production Course, which covers topics from dairy marketing to milking management has been updated, says Pat Davidson, the department's home study coordinator.

Three chapters have been completely rewritten to reflect changes in industry policy and structure, while other modifications to the 10-part course reflect advances in technology.

"The course is written to be of value to both beginner dairy farmers as well as established producers," says Davidson.

Chapters include dairy marketing, milk recording and management systems, dairy cattle breeding, feeding and management, dairy housing and equipment, milking equipment; milking management; quality milk production; dairy herd health and financial planning.

As with all of the dozen home study courses developed by the department, dairy producers can work through the step by step material at their own pace.

The department will be mailing copies of the three new chapters to about 800 producers who bought the first edition of the home study course.

The full 10-part course is available for $30, while individual chapters are $5 each.

Dairymen interested in obtaining a copy of the updated home study course should mail applications with cheque or money order to REDA, 14815 - 119 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5L 2N9.

For further information on the course contact the home study program office in Edmonton at 427-2404 or the department's dairy farm production branch in Wetaskiwin at 352-1220.

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Contact: Pat Davidson
427-2404

April 27, 1987
For immediate release

Field pea production sets a record

Field pea production in Alberta is expected to increase about 500 per cent in 1987 as an estimated 1,500 farmers across the province plant a record 150,000 acres of the high protein/high yield legume.

Specialists with Alberta Agriculture say this could launch a new "cinderella" crop for the province, as producers look to alternate ways to improve cash flow and to meet world demand for high protein livestock feed.

Dry field peas have been grown in Alberta for years, primarily to be used by the food processing industry for canned or frozen peas. But attention has turned to using peas for livestock feed.

"Everything seems to have come together this year as far as field peas are concerned," says Bob Park, provincial supervisor of special crops with the department's field crops branch in Lacombe.

"There have been some demonstration projects in Alberta growing field peas mainly to be used as dairy and hog feed and now this year for the first time contractors are offering feed contracts for production of field peas.

"Cereal grain prices are down, there is a demand of high protein livestock feed and contracts are available. It has all come together to set off this explosion of interest in field pea production."

Ken Lopetinsky, a forage and special crops specialist with the department in Barrhead says he believes field peas will continue to gain ground in Alberta.

"Some people are predicting this as the new "cinderella" crop in Alberta," he says. "It may be like canola a few years ago. There was some interest in canola - it was considered a special crop - and then it really took off. Now we have about three million acres of it grown in Alberta.

(Cont'd)

Field pea production sets a record (cont'd)

"Field peas could follow the same route. If the weather cooperates and producers can experience a couple good years, then I feel it will establish itself as an important new crop and help to diversify our agricultural base.

The specialists estimate about half of the acreage planted this year will go for livestock feed while the other half will go for human consumption.

The peas are grown under feed contracts offered by grain companies such as Continental, All-State, Alberta Wheat Pool and Cargill. Planted and harvested with conventional farming equipment the shelled peas are used primarily as a protein supplement in livestock rations. There is a market for the supplement not only in Alberta, but around the world.

The specialists say although the crop is not difficult to grow it does require some different treatment. Park says with many first-time growers involved this year, they shouldn't be shy about asking questions and learning all they can about field pea production.

For more information on field pea production contact a district agriculturist or Bob Park in Lacombe at 782-4641, Ken Lopetinsky in Barrhead at 674-8258 or Blair Roth, special crops specialist in Lethbridge at 381-5127.

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Contact: Bob Park 782-4641
Ken Lopetinsky 674-8258
Blair Roth 381-5127

April 27, 1987
For immediate release

Field peas need new management approach

Grain and oilseed farmers who may be turning their hand to field pea production this year should realize they are dealing with a different cat, say specialists with Alberta Agriculture.

They say the planting and harvesting equipment needed for field peas is basically the same as other crops, but the procedure and timing for successful pea production is different from wheat, oats, barley and canola.

Bob Park, provincial supervisor of special crops and Ken Lopetinksy, a forage and special crops specialist say there is a production checklist pea growers should know. And they say growers shouldn't be shy about asking even the most basic question about crop production.

The specialists say the main production points to remember include:

1. Plant early - as soon as the soil temperature reaches 4 - 5 Celsius. Aim for planting betweeen May 1 to 15.

2. Seed peas in stubble or in soil that has low nitrogen levels. The legume will create its own nitrogen.

3. Test to make sure there are no herbicide residues in the soil that will adversely affect pea production.

4. Field peas don't compete well against weeds. Decide on what herbicides are needed and plan on when to apply them.

5. Handle the seed gently. Cracked and broken seeds have less potential to germinate.

6. Use the proper innoculant and sticking agent to ensure the peas will be fixing their own nitrogen.

7. Make sure you put enough seed in the ground. You need about 12 seeds per yard of row, or a seed every three inches.

8. Don't worry about nitrogen, but make sure other fertilizer needs, particularly phosphorous, are met.

9. Peas planted early require an 85 to 95 day growing season. Be thinking about harvesting when the plants begin to dry down.

10. Swath peas at a time when they have reached the highest maturity and yet shattering losses will be minimal.

(Cont'd)

11. Combine to achieve a safe moisture storage of about 16 per cent. Some producers start combining at 18 or 19 per cent moisture, but use aeration or some type of dryer to bring moisture down. Don't let moisture drop much below 16 per cent or cracking and splitting will be a problem.

12. Use a good straw chopper to get the trash or plant residue spread evenly over the field and work it into the soil. It could be the same as putting on 35 to 40 pounds of nitrogen per acre.

Lopetinsky says because many producers are trying field peas for the first time there will be many questions and some trial and error.

He says getting the seed in the ground early is important. Peas are considered a cool crop and tend to have a growth slow down during hot weather. The later the crop is planted, the longer it will take the crop to reach maturity.

"One of the benefits of including field peas in a crop rotation is getting them harvested before many of the cereals are ready," he says. If the weather cooperates the field pea harvest could be over by the first of September and not create a conflict with harvesting cereals and oilseeds.

The specialist says too much nitrogen in the soil will actually work against field pea production. The high nitrogen will result in more bulk and stem growth and less growth in actual seed production. He says plant peas in stubble or in low nitrogen soil.

In selecting a field for peas, producers should consider the history of the field. Lopetinksy says peas should not be planted where residue of herbicides such as Glean, Tordon 202C or Lontrel may be present. Even a light residue could seriously reduce production. He suggests having a residue analysis made at one of the soil test laboratories in the province.

When seeding, he says select a field that is relatively uniform in soil type and topography and avoid waterlogged areas. The uniformity will produce an even crop that makes harvesting easier.

(Cont'd)

Field peas need new management approach (cont'd)

Producers should make sure the pea field doesn't become weedy. Peas don't compete well, especially at the early growth stage. Even volunteer grains can cut into production. Lopetinsky says farmers should decide on whether they are using pre or post emergent herbicides and get them applied in time.

Although peas can be seeded with a conventional drill, the rate of seeding is important. In general terms peas should be seeded at about 150 pounds per acre, but this can range from 110 to nearly 200 pounds per acre depending on seed size.

Lopetinsky says a good guideline is to plant one seed every three inches.

He also warns about handling the seed gently to avoid cracks and splitting which reduces germination. He says to make sure the seed cups or gates on the seeder are wide open to avoid seed damage.

Peas need to be innoculated before planting with a proper pea innoculant. He suggests using double the recommended amount of innoculant and also says some sort of sticking agent should be used to get the innoculant to adhere to the seed. Agents such as skim milk, corn syrup, honey, sugar and non-toxic wall paper glue can be used along with commercial stickers.

Producers shouldn't worry about a lack of nitrogen for the crop because peas, as a legume, will fix their own nitrogen, when properly innoculated. But the specialist says other nutrients such as phosphorous, potassium and sulphur may be required.

"Those who use fertilizer blends such as PK or PKS in other areas of crop production can use these for field peas. They should apply the blend at rates that will supply about 30 pounds of phosphate to the soil."

The length of the growing season, or days to harvest will depend on four factors, says Lopetinsky. The season will fluctuate depending on time of seeding, variety of pea seeded, nitrogen level and moisture regime.

In ballpark terms peas should be ready for harvest within 85 to 95 days. Plant drydown and peas hardening in the pod are good indicators that the growing season is over.

(Cont'd)

Lopetinsky says the crop can be swathed and then left to mature before combining, or a desiccant, which speeds up the drying process can be applied, followed by swathing or straight combining.

Because peas have a tendency to lodge, Lopetinsky says there are two features the swather must have. It needs a good pickup reel and halfmoon lifter fingers are needed on the cutter bar to lift the swath. One half moon lifter is needed at every 12 inches along the cutter bar. The specialist estimated the cost at $10 per finger or about $150 to outfit the swather.

He says if the crop is going to be swathed, the farmer should try and lay a uniform swath. The crop can be heavy and can cause problems for the combine if the swath is bunched. He says the producer needs to cut down the swather speed to deliver a more uniform swath.

For peas to be accepted for livestock feed they must be below 17 per cent moisture and at least 92 per cent pure peas. Lopetinsky says peas can be safely stored at 16 per cent moisture. He says they should not be much below 16 per cent to reduce the risk of cracking and splitting.

Again he says to be gentle when handling the seed. He says producers should run loading and unloading augers full, and at lower speeds to avoid seed damage.

He says use a straw chopper to spread the trash or crop residue evenly over the field and work it into the soil. The residue will improve the nitrogen level in the soil for the next crop in the rotation.

The specialist says as with any crop, peas should be rotated. He says peas should not be followed by peas.

For further information on field pea production contact any district agriculturist or Bob Park at the field crops branch in Lacombe at 782-4641, Ken Lopetinsky at Alberta Agriculture's regional office in Barrhead at 674-8258, or Blair Roth, the department's special crops specialist in Lethbridge at 381-5127.

Contact:	Bob Park	Ken Lopetinsky	Blair Roth
	782-4641	674-48258	381-5127

April 27, 1987
For immediate release

Wheat growers concerned about disease

The Alberta Soft Wheat Growers Association is concerned about the potential for severe disease problems in this year's soft wheat crop, says an association spokesman.

The severity of the disease problems will depend on the weather conditions during the growing season, says Will Van Roessel of Bow Island, chairman of the association's research and production committee.

"A hot dry summer, such as in 1985 will restrict disease development," he says. "However, a cool and damp growing season could result in a disaster."

Van Roessel says the three main areas of concern include stripe rust, foliar disease and root disease.

"With the very mild winter and the wet fall, the possibility of stripe rust overwintering on winter wheat could seem at least as likely as last year," he says. "The best solution is to grow Owens variety. The next best alternative is careful monitoring of fields and being prepared to use a fungicide if necessary."

He says by late May plant pathologisits may have an indication of the winter survival of stripe rust in southern Alberta.

The next area of concern is other foliar diseases, such as tan spot and septoria leaf blotch.

"These diseases were very prevalent last year and generally overwinter on stubble," says Van Roessel. "The disease carryover will likely be most severe on fields that were not well worked after harvest.

"If a grower must seed soft wheat on stubble land the trash should be well worked or preferably plowed down. Application of a fungicide could be profitable in some cases."

Another potential problem is root disease, such as take-all root rot. Crop rotation is the only way to minimize this disease problem, says the spokesman.

(Cont'd)

Wheat growers concerned about disease (cont'd)

Van Roessel says the recent registration of the fungicide Tilt, marketed by Ciba-Geigy is good news to soft wheat growers. It will control most foliar diseases for three to four weeks after application. However it will only be available on a restricted basis for 1987. Another fungicide, Dithane M-45 will again be available this year.

For more information on soft wheat disease problems contact Will Van Roessel, at the Alberta Soft Wheat Growers Assocation in Bow Island at 545-6598.

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Contact: Will Van Roessel
545-6598

April 27, 1987
For immediate release

Acting director for animal health division appointed

Dr. Terry Church has been named acting director of Alberta Agriculture's Animal Health Division.

In making the announcement, J. Harold Hanna, assistant deputy minister, production sector, says that Church will serve in the new post for a term of up to two years.

The position of acting director was created by the transfer of Dr. Ralph Christian to the office of executive director of research.

In his new postion, Church will be responsible for the direction and administration of veterinary diagnostic laboratories at Airdrie, Edmonton, Fairview and Lethbridge; provincial meat inspection programs; and field programs to maintain and improve the health of food producing animals in Alberta.

Church has been the head of the health management branch since September 1979. As branch head, he was in charge of field programs and activities to improve the health of production animals in Alberta.

He was actively involved in a large research project designed to study the factors associated with the occurrence of respiratory disease in feedlot cattle.

Church also maintained an active involvement in extension programs for beef cattle producers.

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Contact: Dr. Terry Church
427-2166

April 27, 1987
For immediate release

Census information to be released

Agricultural information collected during the 1986 federal census will soon be available to Alberta farmers and others interested in the agriculture industry.

Chuck Sterling, head of Alberta Agriculture's statistics branch in Edmonton, says information collected in the 1986 Census of Agriculture, which was part of the general federal census, will soon be released.

"The Agriculture and Natural Resources Division of Statistics Canada has announced tentative release dates for the census data," says Sterling. "The release of this information will be of benefit to many users of agriculture census data."

Federal officials will be releasing information on the following proposed dates: April 29 - Canadian and provincial farm numbers and farm area; June 3 - Canadian and provincial data on all other questions asked on the census questionnaire; and June 26 - a breakdown of all questions asked in the census according to county, municipal district and improvement district in Alberta.

"The statistics branch of Alberta Agriculture is the focal point for agriculture census data and will be receiving the data shortly after the scheduled Ottawa release time," says Sterling.

The branch intends to prepare summary release data for Alberta to be sent out to interested clients. These summaries will highlight agricultural facts and figures according to the province's agriculture districts. Anyone wanting a copy of data should contact Alberta Agriculture statistics branch staff in Edmonton, at 427-4011.

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Contact: Chuck Sterling
427-4011

April 27, 1987
For immediate release

Spring soil test useful for home gardener

Soil testing isn't just for farmers trying to grow wheat on a section of land, says a specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

Having a spring soil test performed for lawns and gardens is an effective means of deciding the amount of fertilizer to apply, says Len Kryzanowski, a soil specialist with the department's soils and animal nutrition laboratory in Edmonton.

"Soil testing will measure the fertility level in soil as well as help identify reasons for poor plant growth and assist in planning corrective action," he says. "However, it is essential that a proper soil sample be collected."

Kryzanowski says there are several keys points to remember when collecting a soil sample.

1. Do not sample frozen or waterlogged areas.

2. Size up each area before sampling. Divide areas based on differences in plant growth, soil texture, color and past management. Separate samples should be taken from each different area.

3. Within each individual area, sample between 10 to 15 places at random. Take a uniform core or thin slice of soil using a spade from each place. For gardens, flower beds, and lawns, take samples to a depth of 6 inches (15 cm). For trees, samples should be taken for 0-6 inches (0-15 cm), plus sampling of 6-12 inch (15-30 cm) and 12-24 inch (30-60 cm) depths should be considered. For samples below 6 inches (15 cm) a coring tube should be used.

(Cont'd)

Spring soil test useful for home gardener (cont'd)

4. Collect samples in a clean pail keeping individual depths separate. Mix all cores of the same depth together, thoroughly crushing small lumps with fingers.

5. Spread the sample on a clean sheet of paper or plastic and allow samples to air dry for two to three days. Do not send wet samples for soil testing.

6. Place the dried sample in a sample box or shipping container. Approximately one pint (one pound) of soil is required for each sample.

7. Complete an information sheet, especially noting any problems.

8. Samples and the information sheet can be sent or delivered to Alberta Agriculture's soils and animal nutrition laboratory.

A soil test will provide the levels of available nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and sulphur, pH, salt level, sodium, texture and free lime rating.

To obtain sample boxes and information sheets, contact any Alberta Agriculture district office or the Soils and Animal Nutrition Laboratory.

For further information on soil sampling contact the Soils and Animal Nutrition Laboratory, 9th Floor, O.S. Longman Building, 6909 - 116 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 4P2, or telephone 436-9150, Rite No. 427-6362; or the Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre, R.R. 6, Edmonton, Alberta, T5B 4K3, telephone 973-3351.

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Contact: Len Kryzanowski
436-9150

Pam North
Alberta Tree Nursery and Horticulture Centre
973-3351

April 27, 1987
For immediate release

Agri-News Briefs

NO SHORTAGE OF LIVESTOCK FEED

Thanks to a good growing season last year and a mild winter there appears to be little shortage of livestock feed across the province, according to an Alberta Agriculture report. Keir Packer with the department's statistics branch in Edmonton, says many districts are reporting fodder and feed grain surpluses this spring. "There are very few locations reporting even a possible shortfall in feed," says Packer in his spring report. "Hay prices have been reduced sharply from last year's levels and are currently trading in the $40 to $50 a ton range. Demand is very slack in surplus areas." Brooks is one area reporting a shortfall of feed barley and feed oats, while there are reports of hay shortages around Coronation and shortfalls of feed oats near Ponoka. In the Peace River region the only locations reporting possible shortfalls are Valleyview and Eaglesham for straw and Cherry Point, Worsley and High Level may run short of feed oats. Reports indicate that cattle and sheep have come through the winter in excellent condition. The calving season is in full swing and demand for calves and feeders remains high.

PORK PRODUCERS TO MEET IN RED DEER

Alberta pork producers are urged to set aside a few days in June to attend the 13th annual Alberta Pork Congress in Red Deer. The three-day conference, June 9, 10, 11, will feature several speakers providing farmers with advice and information on hog production. The meeting will be held at the Westerner Altaplex in Red Deer. For more information contact Carol Voros, manager of the Alberta Pork Congress at 340-5307 or 340-5308.

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Agri-News Briefs (cont'd)

WHEAT SURPLUS INCREASING

With record world wheat production in 1986-87, surplus levels of wheat supplies have increased further, says Alberta Agriculture's market analysis branch. In its quarterly report, the branch says much of the surplus wheat is held by the U.S. and changes in U.S. farm programs have resulted in "significant declines in international wheat prices." Further changes in U.S. farm policy may result in yet lower prices, the report predicts. Canadian exports have recovered in spite of less than favorable international trade conditions. Increased exports, however, will not be enough to offset the substantial increase in supplies resulting from the record 1986 Canadian crop. Carryover supplies will increase particularly for three CWRSs. Price prospects are not favorable particularly for lower grades which run up against the subsidized grains from the U.S. and European Economic Community. For more information contact the market analysis branch in Edmonton at 427-5378.

RECORD BARLEY EXPORT PREDICTED

Although it won't help the price a great deal, Canadian barley exports are expected to reach record levels this year, says a report prepared by Alberta Agriculture's market analysis branch. The quarterly update on the market situation says the record exports are attributed to the Soviet Union's "apparent preference to seek feed grains from all other sources before buying from the U.S.". While 1986-87 world coarse grain output was slightly below the previous year's record level, it still exceeded expected consumption and added to inventory, says the report. Changes in the U.S. farm programs have resulted in a significant decline in international prices. For more information contact the market analysis branch in Edmonton at 427-5378.

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Agri-News Briefs (cont'd)

NO GOOD NEWS FOR CANOLA AND FLAX

Things are expected to get worse before they get better in the oilseed business, as global oversupply continues to hold oilseed prices to the mat, says a report prepared by Alberta Agriculture. The quarterly market update prepared by the department's market analysis branch says "while a weather related short fall in palm oil output provided some temporary support for markets this winter, little impact in canola prices was evident." Production of other oilseeds exceeded anticipated requirements. Further erosion in prices is expected particularly if support provided to soybean markets by U.S. farm programs is reduced. A record Canadian canola crop was harvested under less than ideal conditions, says the report. "The crop size, poor seed quality and depressed markets created a significant marketing challenge. Both exports and domestic crush are, however expected to reach record levels," says the branch. It is doubtful though, whether the increased sales will prevent a build up in inventory, mainly of the lower grade seeds. Flaxseed exports have also incrased as a result of competitive pricing but an increase in inventory is still expected. For more information contact the market analysis branch in Edmonton at 427-5378.

RABBIT INDUSTRY HOPPING

It's not the usual class of livestock one thinks about when discussing agriculture, but rabbit farming is part of production picture in the province, according to the recently released 1985-86 Alberta Agriculture annual report. The department distributed 117 information packages on rabbit production during the year and made several calls to established rabbit raisers for various reasons. Figures indicate about 18,270 rabbits, mostly fryers were processed during the year, an increase of about 6,400 from the year before.

Alberta Agriculture, Print Media Branch, Phone: (403) 427-2121